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A SOCIOLOGICAL STUDY  
OF  
THE PROBLEMS OF JAPANESE WOMEN

BY

KENOSKE SATO

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THESIS

FOR THE

DEGREE OF BACHELOR OF ARTS

IN

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---

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Kenoske Sato

ENTITLED A Sociological Study of the  
Problems of Japanese Women

IS APPROVED BY ME AS FULFILLING THIS PART OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE

DEGREE OF Bachelor of Arts

Instructor in Charge

APPROVED:

E. Hayes

HEAD OF DEPARTMENT OF

Sociology

110769

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# CONTENTS

	Page
Introduction	1
I Historical Study of the Status of Japanese Women	6
1 Origin of the Japanese People.	6
2 Slow Amalgamation and Growth	13
3 Introduction of Chinese Civilization	17
4 Establishment of Feudalism	21
5 Meiji Era	25
II Characteristics of the Japanese Women	28
III Economic Problems	33
1 Wages	34
2 Hours and Conditions of Work	36
3 Economic Independence of Women	43
IV Matrimonial Problems	46
1 Marriage	46
2 Divorce	49
3 Household Problems	54
V Problems of Education	58
1 History of Education	58
2 Present System of Education in Japan	61
3 Problems of Reform	72
VI Problems of Morality	79
1 Buddhism and Morality	79
2 Shinto	81
3 Confucianism	81
4 Bushido	83
VII Summary and Conclusion	85
Bibliography	90



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## Introduction

## A Sociological Study of the Problems of Japanese Women

The rapid advance in scientific knowledge during the 19th century has wrought many changes in man's relation to his environment. An increased understanding of the laws of nature has enabled man voluntarily and rationally to adapt himself to the conditions of his surroundings. Man has busily engaged himself in adjusting the old modes of living to the new, and in creating conditions more favorable to the survival and the progress of his species. Of innumerable conditions created, none is so important as the systems of transportation and communication. Materially, the development of these systems has meant a blessing. It has enabled men to enjoy many new things of foreign production, and to amass fortunes through the sale of domestic products to foreign countries. Moreover, it has done away, once for all, with the famine which previously had threatened constantly. Its effect on the spiritual life of man, however, <sup>has been</sup> ~~was~~ even more significant than on the material. Man's interest which had formerly been limited within a locality has now become world-wide. He is made to feel the effects of every problem that occurs in whatever part of the world. The world, in short, has been closely knit together and the perception of a common humanity made clearer.

It is natural that a closer relationship between the nations tends to increase the possibility of international conflict. Oriental nations knew this truth and therefore shut themselves up within walls preferring peaceful solitude to incessant strife and strain. That such a policy was unwise has been proved by the backwardness of the Oriental nations compared with the nations of





Europe. Indeed it is only through coming into contact with other cultures that any civilization grows, for a civilization, like an organism, grows in vigor, and improves in quality only through cross-fertilization<sup>s</sup>. The process of world progress<sup>e</sup>, moreover, is inclusive and synthetic as the development of the systems of transportation and communication has well exemplified, and the separation therefrom means only degeneration or failure to survive. It is the lot of nations, then, to enter into the world-competition and try out their fortunes, or to choose the alternative---extinction. But, while to choose the former step, as every nation must, <sup>brings</sup> ~~be~~ a glorious feature for strong nations, it must be an irksome task for weaker nations as it means the putting together of the lion and the sheep. Very properly might India, China, and Korea have regretted their entrance to the league of nations, for it cost them their national independence and integrity. Admitting, then, that the international intercourse is a necessarily condition of human progress, it must, at the same time, be conceded that there is something wrong with the present system of international relationship which makes nations suspicious and feel insecure.

To point out just what is the matter with the present system of international association is not ~~as~~ difficult as to convince <sup>the</sup> world of ~~the~~ necessity of its reform. In the first place, nations have not as yet learned how to reconcile national interest with that of mankind as a whole. Reason has taught individuals that the best way of living is to wisely adjust <sup>one's</sup> ~~his~~ self-interest to the interest of ~~the~~ society. But the test of reason has not as yet been applied to the matters of the international relationship and might still prevails over and against truth and justice.





In the second place, the control of international affairs has been entirely left to the hands of a few statemen, diplomats, and militarists, who, naturally faithful to their posts, endeavor to establish international relationship on the bases of their professions, namely, politic<sup>s</sup>, diplomacy, and militarism. We know through practical experiences what are the outcomes of an association conducted on these bases----it is simply making of treaties, quarrel<sup>ing</sup> over commercial interests, and exchange<sup>ing</sup> of spies and iron and fire. The circumstances which led to the present war illustrate this point very adequately. Finally, in the third place, the ignorance of peoples of each others' life, ideas<sup>s</sup>, and philosophy is profound. It goes without saying that ~~the~~ friendship is <sup>only</sup> possible <sup>only</sup> when peoples look upon each other's beautiful qualities and not when they look at each other's fighting capacity. And yet while in economic and militaristic ways peoples know each other too well, in <sup>the</sup> gentler side of life they know almost nothing.

It seems that it is ~~a~~ high time now to revolutionize the mode of international association. This, indeed, must be done if peoples earnestly desire peace and progress. To do it, a strong international morality should be enforced, obliq<sup>ing</sup> nations to sacrifice national interest if it comes into conflict with the interests of humanity. Again, the power of conducting international affairs must be taken from the hands of politicians and militarists and the peoples themselves must carry on the business. This is the fundamental <sup>requirement</sup> of democracy in so far as it is concerned with international problems. If peoples freely associate without any political or military implications, it will undoubtedly diminish the practice of secret diplomacies, and surely promote a cosmopolitan spirit. Such free intercourse, however, must be



based on sympathy but sympathy arises only after a thorough understanding of each other. Hence the learning of gentle, artistic, and domestic sides of <sup>other</sup> peoples' lives becomes a supreme necessity.

The consciousness of this fact gave me a special encouragement in preparing a paper dealing with the subject of women of Japan, for the study of the Japanese women is at once the study of domestic and social sides of the national life, the study of which, as I have just argued, constitutes an essential element for the promotion of cosmopolitan spirit<sup>the</sup> among the nations. Women, moreover, being the nucleus of wholesome activities of national life, and being inherently peace-loving, and sympathetic in nature, constitute a factor upon which the world must depend for the improvement of international relationship<sup>s</sup>. Accordingly, I <sup>have</sup> endeavored to present most frankly in some detail the social problems of the Japanese women with due emphasis on national life as a whole, for a study of any factor of society can be fruitful only when the proper relationship of the part to the whole is not lost sight of. It gives me a particular pleasure to remark that I am in a peculiarly favorable position to deal with this subject. In the first place, my many years of sojourn in America enables me to see the society of Japan with <sup>a</sup>critical eye, and in the second place, staying abroad, I am able to see the whole social activities of the people in a more well proportioned perspective. I shall first trace briefly the history of the Japanese woman and then describe her characteristics, and finally, the main thesis, her problems, comparing and contrasting occasionally the corresponding points between her and her sisters in America, and giving some constructive programs of solution





based on the study of Occidental societies.

As to the significance of the Japanese woman's problem, the following quotation from Griffis' "Mikado's Empire" will best explain:

"The whole question of the position of Japanese women-----  
in history, social life, education, prostitution, benevolent  
labor, the ideals of literature, popular superstition, etc.-----  
discloses such a wide and fascinating field of inquiry that I  
wonder no one as yet entered it."



## I Historical study of the Status of Japanese Women.

### 1 Origin of the Japanese people

Hidden behind the vail of mythology, the <sup>l</sup>earliest history of Japan still remains largely confused and obscure. It was not till quite recently that any attempt to study it in the light of modern sciences was started. Nor do the Japanese desire to have mercilessly analyzed the beautiful and wonderful legends which have been handed down during thousand of years, and which the people believe to have actually happened in ancient Japan. To have described in terms of anthropology and ethnology the marvelous stories of ancient gods, whom the people adore and cherish as their great ancestors, means an insult to gods, and a thing unbearable to them. Such sentiment is quite natural to the people who enshrine and worship the spirits of their great ancestors. Recently, however, the European scholars of anthropology and history began to undertake the study of ancient Japan and, to the surprise and disillusionment of the natives, brought into light many evidences of the savage lives of the ancient inhabitants who roamed around the Islands in eager quest of food. Stimulated by the results of the researches made by foreigners, some of the native scholars also began scientific studies of ancient Japan. Altho the foreigners are seriously handicapped by the difficulty of getting the first hand material and the native investigators, by the lack of broad knowledge of anthropology in general, they are fortunately working in unison each supplementing the shortcomings of the other, and assure us of a great future success.





a large and prosperous family. She once called her son, Ninigi no Mikoto before <sup>her</sup> and, handing to him three Imperial Insignia, said, "The ~~Yonder~~ lands of reeds are the lands you and your children are entitled to rule forever. Go thither, my son, and flourish." Ninigi no Mikoto set out for the journey with a band of followers including men and women, and after <sup>1</sup> long and perilous travel, finally reached ~~to~~ the southern extreme of Japan and settled at Hyuga in Kyushu. Later, his grandson, Toyouke Numa Mikoto, a brave and brilliant youth, marched toward the east with his army and conquered many savage tribes of the main Island. He finally reached ~~to~~ the central point of the Hodo which he named Yamato and where, in the year 660 B.C. he fixed his permanent home and proclaimed himself the Emperor of Japan. He reigned for 75 years and died in 585 B.C. at the age of 125. He was ~~was~~ given the posthumous name of Jimmu. He ~~was~~ the founder of Japanese Empire and from him sprang the unbroken chain of Japanese Royalty.

A mythology of this kind furnishes a fertile ground for all kinds of speculation in its interpretation. Numerous scholars <sup>have</sup> formulated ~~the~~ opinions of their own but none seems very convincing. There are a few scholars, however, whose knowledge of general anthropology and whose scientific attitude command a respectable <sup>fair</sup> hearing. Incidentally most of them happened ~~to~~ be Englishmen. They are Brinkley, Chamberlain, Munro, Aston, Langford, and Griffiths; the last being an American. These scholars, taking references from the old Chinese and Korean as well as Japanese records, and from archeological data recently obtained, attempted ~~at~~ the rationalization of the <sup>1</sup> They were a mirror, a sword, and a necklace. All of these are to this day most sacredly guarded.



The earliest records that remain to-day are Kojiki (Records of Old Things) written in the year 711 A.D. by Yasumaro, and Nihongi (History of Japan) prepared by Hieda no Are in the year 714. In the earliest era of historic Japan when writing was unknown, there existed a hereditary cooperation of raconteurs (Kataribe) who from generation to generation, performed the function of reciting the exploits of the sovereigns and the deeds of heroes. They accompanied themselves on musical instruments and narrated the stories to fit the occasions adding some elements of supernaturalism. The two records being collections of the stories told by the Kataribe, contain mostly the ridiculous and incredible accounts of the prehistoric Japan. And yet so valuable are the lights that these old remnants throw upon the lives of the old dwellers, that they are studied with utmost care and thoroughness.

In brief the records narrate the following account: Once upon <sup>a</sup>the time there descended three gods from heaven to an adjoining island of Japan called Takamagahara, and lived there prosperously. Among their descendants were a girl called Izanami and a youth named Izanagi. These two young people married and started out for a long journey in search for a suitable home in Japan. After investigating thoroughly the conditions of Japan, the two "gods" returned home where they soon became the parents of three children. One of the children was the Sun Goddess whom the Japanese call the mother of the Yamato race and whose spirit, it is said, to be enshrined in

<sup>1</sup> Ise. The Sun goddess was an influential personage and headed

<sup>1</sup> The Sun Goddess is never conceived of by the natives as a mythical character. The Ise Shrine is by far the most sacred place in Japan and is the headquarters of Shintoism.





mythology. Though the theories formulated by them show elements of disparity between them, they agree as to the most ~~of~~ fundamental points.

Exceedingly interesting as the details of the studies made <sup>are,</sup> by these authorities, they fall beyond ~~and~~ the scope of <sup>the</sup> present thesis. Suffice it here to summarize a few <sup>v</sup>points that are wholly agreed upon by the scholars. The earliest known inhabitants of Japan were Ainus. To what race did they belong and from where did they come are not known. Dr. Griffis undertook <sup>1</sup> to prove that they were Aryans ~~see~~ who migrated from Europe before the dawn of history. Their features, color of skin, and language together with their cave-dwelling, carnivorous habits, all of which are quite different from those of any other Asiatic races, suggest the possibility of Dr. Griffis' theory altho at present he stands almost alone in the opinion. Others believe that <sup>they</sup> came from northern Siberia by way of Saghalin. (See the map on page 11)

The Ainu had settled in Japan long prior to the coming of any other known races of Nippon. According to the evidences presented by Professor Chamberlain, they occupied <sup>the</sup> entire northern portion of the main Island reaching as far south as Fuji Yama.<sup>2</sup> They were <sup>an</sup> exceedingly hairy race with sturdy physique. They were primarily hunting people knowing nothing about agriculture. Judging from the data recently brought into light through the excavation of 4,000 residential sites of shell heaps, their culture seems to have been in <sup>the</sup> neolithic stage. Rude potteries not turned by wheel, polished, finely

1 Japanese Nation in Evolution pp.1-30

2 The name, Fuji Yama means goddess of fire in Ainu.  
Griffis, The Japanese in Evolution. p.3

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chipped, and roughly hewn implements and weapons were discovered metallic objects being entirely absent. A very interesting account of the ancient Ainu is found in one of the old records of Japan which narrates the reports made by Sukune, a general sent out to conquer the Ainu in the second century A.D. The record tells that the Ainu were the most powerful among the eastern savages, that men and women lived together promiscuously there being no distinction of father and child, that they dwelt in holes during the winter and in huts during the summer, that their clothing consisted of furs and <sup>they</sup> carried arrows and bows in hands <sup>their</sup> and a sword within their clothing, and that they were exceedingly revengeful and drank blood.<sup>1</sup> This report vaguely suggests that among the ancient Ainu the promiscuous marriage and the matronymic families prevailed.

Another group of immigrants crossed the narrow sea which separated Korea from Japan and established themselves in Izumo. (See the map on page 11) These immigrants, <sup>who,</sup> according to Mr. Langford, were of the Oural-Altai family, started out originally from the plateau of Siberia.<sup>2</sup> Owing to <sup>the</sup> almost synchronous settlements of this group and the third group from the south, and to their immediate amalgamation, the culture of the Izumo settlers is not distinctly known. Judging from the fact that the remnants of the Malay group contain only iron implements, but those of the Izumo group consist of both iron and bronze tools, the scholars seem to agree that the Izumo settlers were in the bronze stage of culture when they arrived Japan. They were, generally

1 The speech of the Emperor Suiko recorded in Kojiki, quoted by Brinkley, History of the Japanese people pp.36-37.

2 Langford, Japan of the Japanese pp.26-27.







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speaking, rather warriors than settlers and remained in <sup>the</sup> barren north leaving the country largely uncultivated.

The most important of all immigrants were Yamato or southern settlers who, drifting by the strong current of Kuroshio (Black tide) that swept northward from Indian Sea toward the southern extreme of Japan, and landed in Kyushu and settled at Hyuga. They were of small stature but active, energetic and courageous. type. The remnants of the Yamato include swords, arrow heads of iron, and imitation of sheth-knives, hard potteries moulded on the wheel, mirrors, jingle-bells, and some of the copper wares in connection with the work of the gold and silver smith. Agriculture was quite well developed and the arts of spinning and weaving were known. They were accordingly well clothed, wearing apparel made of hempen cloth, and of fibre prepared from the inner fibre of paper mulberry.

They had social organization of quite <sup>a</sup> high type based upon the family as the unit. Families were, as we noticed in case of the Sun Goddess, matr<sup>y</sup>nomic and marriages were largely promiscuous. As to the question of the origin of the Yamato, the opinions of the authorities are diverse. Dr. Munro argues that "Judging from the Caucasian and often Semitic physiognomy seen in the aristocratic type of Japanese, the Yamato were mainly of Caucasian perhaps Iranian origin. Professor Baelz is of opinion that they belonged to Manchu-Korean type. Most scholars, however, agree that they were Malaysians lived in the neighboring islands of Borneo.

This even a brief description of the origin of the people reveals the fact that the Japanese are made up, at least, of three





distinct races with widely different cultures. It is possible, moreover, as Count Okuma suggests, that there may have settled in Japan during early periods some of the races of India, Mongolia,<sup>and</sup> Tartary in addition to the three groups above described.<sup>1</sup> This fusion of many races has an important significance, as we shall see later, in laying a foundation for the establishment of a vigorous nation and a brilliant civilization. Another chief feature to be noticed is the fact that the ancestors of the Japanese were not gods as they like to believe, but a normal type of the savage not differing at all from the savage ancestors of any other race.

#### Slow Amalgamation and Growth

The Yamato, the most aggressive and advanced race, increased rapidly in number, and under organized forces, marched eastward conquering the scattered tribes of <sup>the</sup> Izumo and Ainu races. The Izumo settlers seem to have easily been subdued, and readily amalgamated by the Yamato due, perhaps, to the resemblance between the cultures of the two. The Ainu, however, though inherently docile, offered here and there stubborn resistances against the invaders. While those Ainu who were conquered were readily amalgamated, those who resisted were gradually driven northward and after <sup>a</sup>series of unsuccessful attempts to withstand the Yamato during ten centuries were finally confined in Hokkaido, the present home of the Ainu. When the powerful enemies were thus conquered and assimilated, the Yamato race, with <sup>a</sup>genius of colonization, established, in the year 660 B.C., a government

1 Okuma, Fifty Years of New Japan, vol.2 pp.11-12



with Emperor Jimmu at its head. The kamis or the kinsmen of the Emperor were sent out to different districts to rule over the conquered tribes. These kamis taught and encouraged the advanced methods of agriculture and industry which had been almost unknown to the conquered tribes. Intermarriage took place freely between races and amalgamation followed rapidly.

The geographical conditions of Japan favored the economic progress of the races. Fish, fowls, animals abounded in all mountain regions; trees, vegetables, nuts, fruits, rice, and maizes grew in plenty; valuable minerals were found in many places. The Yamato, being skilled in both agriculture and industry, utilized the gifts of nature in all ways and rapidly established economic security. While men tilled the soil, women spun and wove. Industries such as pottery-making, metal and jewel works and ship-building grew rapidly, which resulted in the establishment of the division of labor, not only between the sexes, but also among the social classes. Standards of living rose as the result of interaction between production and demand. Thus only within a few centuries after the establishment of the Empire the people emerged economically out of the barbaric stage of uncertainty.

In this connection woman's share in the primitive industry must be briefly stated, for the ancient Japanese women were exceedingly industrious. In arts of spinning, netting, looping, braiding, and sewing, they monopolized <sup>the</sup> entire field. Almost all burdens of <sup>the</sup> household undoubtedly must have fallen upon the shoulders of the women as they do in our time. They were, as Mason points out, the beasts of burden and rendered great service in transportation of products. Beside all these tasks, they







helped men in tilling the soil, and in harvesting the crops, and in domesticating animals. In fact, as Veblen insists, "the whole range of industrial employments is an outgrowth of what is classed as woman's work in the primitive barbarian community." Indeed had it not been woman's valuable services performed so willingly and patiently of creating new demands, of fostering and preserving what was good and useful, Japan would never have emerged out of mere savagery just as the whole world would never have reached to the level of present civilization without woman's service.

The geographical conditions of Japan were also conducive to the early growth of national unity and intelligence. Environments directly determine the mode of living of the inhabitants through the kind of material supply they offer, but they also, as Buckle and Semple have taught us, influence the intellectual and <sup>p</sup>iritual sides of men. At the dawn of Japanese history, we already observe a homogeneous, distinct Japanese nation, well advanced ~~towards being~~ a civilized people. Such rapid growth of national unity and culture were due primarily to the readiness with which the races were amalgamated. The fusion of three distinct races into one nation meant not only the invigoration of the national stock, but also a cross-fertilization of three distinct cultures. The Yamato were an industrial and ~~and~~ agricultural race endowed with the genius of social organization. The Izumo group were haughty, proud, and aristocratic warriors, while the Ainu were a race with docile nature and a delicate sentimentality. The combination of industrial, aristocratic, and literary traits could not but result in



enrichment of racial stock. But it was the peculiar insular conditions of Japan that made the complete and rapid fusion possible. The little Island of Hondo, mild of climate, rich in food, with no disturbances from <sup>the</sup> outside was an ideal melting pot for the races.

The aspect of nature also exercised a great influence on spiritual side of the people. In Japan was found a real masterpiece of nature's artistic works. With snow-clad Fuji Yama, the most sacred mountain at its center, the Japan Alps run northward and southward reflecting the light of the rising sun. Numerous rivers, short and rapid, emptied <sup>in</sup> to the surrounding seas forming on their way many beautiful waterfalls and cataracts. Trees grew in abundance rendering the appearance of <sup>the</sup> whole country silvan and verdurous. The beautiful Pacific Ocean spread beneath the feet of <sup>the</sup> mountains reflecting <sup>the</sup> mountains' clear outline on its calm surface. Numerous flowers, rich in color and delicate in shape, bloomed <sup>in</sup> all the seasons in valleys and by mountain sides and birds warbled joyful notes of natural music. Happy indeed must have been the people who dwelt in this ancient Japan untouched by the artificial devices of modern civilization. Such <sup>a</sup> beautiful, inspiring aspect of nature could not but influence the mind of the early Japanese. The gentleness of nature and artistic sentiment, which are recognized characteristics of the Japanese to-day are but an evidence of the great influence of nature on the people.

With the growth of economic activities, a clear division of labor was established which in turn gave rise to class distinction. A certain class of people by virtue of the kind of profession to which they belonged, came to be exempted







from manual labor. Such professions were consist of government service, religious observances, and military service. Partly from the inherent worth of men who belonged to these professions and partly from the relative importance of such services to the state, men of these profession came to distinguish themselves as rulers, aristocrats, and as leisure class. The rise of these classes bears an important significance to the early growth of Japanese civilization.

Practically all cultural activities of early Japan were carried on by the leisure class. Early education, art, and literature as well as religion were promoted by this class. A writing, peculiar to the Japanese, was originated, and literature, especially the poetry of tender emotion, flourished as we see in Manyoshu, the collection of the earliest poems. Arts of painting, <sup>and</sup> carving also developed under the patronage of the privileged class. Gentle and graceful manners and decorum which was later developed to the elaborate ceremonies of flower arrangement and tea serving were also cultivated by the aristocrats from their desire to distinguish themselves from the vulgar mass. The greatest service, however, that the leisure class rendered at this time was the opening of intercourse with Korea and China, which were far ahead of Japan in point of civilization.

### 3 Introduction of Chinese Civilization.

It was quite possible, as Brinkley argues,<sup>1</sup> that some sort of communication should have existed between China and Japan shortly prior to the Christian era. But it was not till the

1 History of the Japanese People page 25.



introduction of Buddhism in the year 552 A.D. that real intercourse between the nations came to exist. Japanese Buddhism brought from China by way of Korea was of "Mahayana" type called in Japanese "Daijyo". This branch of Buddhism taught the doctrine of transformation of <sup>the</sup> soul, of heaven and hell, and of salvation by prayer, and its advent introduced the Japanese to a new world of ideas.<sup>1</sup>

At first the Japanese resisted the introduction of the religion and threw into a river the bronze image of Buddha brought over from Korea. Incidentally plague prevailed in Japan shortly after the outrage and the Emperor ordered the image to be recovered and the religion to be worshipped. During the first century after its introduction, Buddhism obtained a firm footing among the upper classes but it failed to spread among the common people. Native religion of Kami still prevailed among the plebeian. Prince Shotoku, a bright son of Emperor Keiko, did more than any other single individual in disseminating the gospels of Buddha in Japan. It was this prince who solved the most difficult problem of reconciling three opposing creeds, Buddhism, Shinto, and Confucianism by a most ingenious argument. He contended that "Shinto, since its roots spring from Kami, came into existence simultaneously with the heaven and the earth, and thus expounds the origin of human beings. Confucianism being a system of moral principles, is coeval with the middle stage of man. Buddhism, the fruits of principles, arose when the human intellect matured. It explains the last stage of humanity. To like or dislike Buddhism without reason is simply an individual prejudice. Heaven

1 See Barton, Religion of World, page 232.







commands us to obey the reason!"<sup>1</sup> This is a clever argument that the three religions are complementary and therefore they must all be believed.

Confucianism arrived at the same time, <sup>as Buddhism</sup> and spread with remarkable rapidity, especially among the lower classes, teaching filial piety as a foundation of moral living. Shinto which remained till this time a religion of nature worship assimilated the doctrine of filial piety and became a religion of ancestor-worship.<sup>2</sup> Besides these religions, China and Korea had many things to give to Japan. With Buddhism came <sup>the</sup> advanced arts of architecture, drawing, and ideographs. The knowledge of the latter opened a new channel for the introduction of the best scientific, literary, and philosophic knowledge that China possessed at that time. Friendly spirit now prevailed between the peoples of Japan and China and a close intercourse was established which benefitted ~~the~~ both nations in various ways. It attracted many distinguished Chinese who preferred to live in beautiful Japan and were naturalized, contributing to the Japanese a valuable additional racial element. They brought over with them many arts of domestic industry such, for instance, as sericulture which subsequently became the most important industry of Japan, and embroidery and other fancy works all of which soon became favorite employments of the women.

As the result of the contact with Chinese culture, the Japanese suddenly emerged, as Brinkley puts it " from a comparatively rude condition to a state of civilization as high as

1 As translated by Brinkley, History of the Japanese people, page 132

2 The term Shinto is Chinese and was employed by Confucius before its adaptation by the Japanese.



that attained by any country in the world, from the fall of Roman Empire to the rise of modern Occidental nations."<sup>1</sup>

A great social reformation known as Taika Reform soon followed in the year 645 A.D. in which the old system of local government established by the Emperor Jimmu, which in the course of years had degenerated to an hereditary local autocracy, was completely abolished, and in which a new constitution, embodying the principle of constitutional monarchy, was promulgated and put to effect. Imperial right of ownership in all the land throughout the Empire was established and the whole people was once more brought into direct subjugation to the throne. This reformation established national unity and strengthened the power of <sup>the</sup> government enormously.

Now the imperial court became the center of artistic and intellectual pursuits and the golden age of Japanese literature set in. Numerous great scholars gathered around the throne and devoted their time to the promotion of learning. The record shows that this period produced many women of the highest scholarship and literary genius who have never been equaled<sup>l</sup> by the later women. Such women as Murasaki Shikibu and Seisho Nagon and others whose works are now valuable classics of Japan, studied together with men and distinguished themselves by intellectual superiority. Most of the greatest artistic masterpieces of Japan, painting, poetry, architecture, and sculpture that are objects of marvel to the moderns were produced during these periods of four centuries which comprises <sup>the</sup> Nara and the Heian eras.

1 Brinkley, History of the Japanese Vol. I p.98.







The influence of Buddhism and Confucianism upon the status of women during this time did not manifest itself in any marked degree. Slowly and surely, however, in proportion to the ascendancy of these doctrines, they began to reveal poisonous sting which in the course of years completely subjugated women. As will be shown in detail later, both of these teachings had a distinct characteristic of treating women as inferior and sinful creatures whose complete subjugation by man was necessary for the welfare of society. With the gradual ascendancy of these religions, therefore, the once so happy and free women of Japan were gradually brought into bondage only to be freed after ten long centuries when the dawn of a new civilization came to their salvation. Indeed, the brilliant part that the fair sex played during the golden age of learning just described was the last flash of an extinguishing light. Already in it we observed the sad fact of encroaching male predominance.<sup>1</sup>

#### 4 Establish~~ment~~ of Feudalism

The culture of <sup>the</sup>Nara and Heian eras gradually became effeminate and brought about moral decadence of society. The imperial court indulging in esthetic pursuits came to neglect the practical affairs of the country. A few powerful families especially the Fujiwara practically took the control of government and exercised autocratic powers over the nation. Tired of the effeminate court life and chagrined by the Fujiwara despotism, there arose the spirit of rebellion among the sterner type of men who soon overthrew the Fujiwara and attempted to establish a military government. Numerous generals vied with each other for supremacy

<sup>1</sup> The Chinese custom of concubinage was already beginning to <sup>be</sup> in vogue at this time. Brinkley, Hist. of Jap. p216



and the country entered into a long period of civil war. Out of the general confusion came a victorious family of Genji which found its champion in Yoritomo, the founder of feudalism in Japan. Military spirit now prevailed throughout the country and the stern life of duty and loyalty replaced the hedonistic life of the Heian era. It was when Yoritomo, after successfully overcoming his bitter enemy, the Heike, had established at Kamakura a military government duly approved by the emperor, that knighthood reached to its fullest brilliancy. Bushido, the ways of a knight, which Dr. Nitobe so exquisitely described, was originated at this time of military supremacy.

Fortified with his title of Seii Taishogun (generalissimo) given by the emperor, and with the military strength of the empire at his command, he soon proved himself to be a competent ruler. He soon adopted a system of feudalism suitable to the social conditions of middle Japan. The country was divided into 66 provinces with a governor to each of them. The governor was to be assisted by the tax-collectors who were directly responsible to the central government at Kamakura. Lands were divided to the followers of Yoritomo, who, in turn, rented them to farmers. These lords were to pay a certain portion of the products turned in to them by the tenants. This system of feudalism encouraged the intense cultivation of the soil, and produced habits of industry among the common people.

With the establishment of the Bakufu, meaning the camp office, intended to convey the fact that the affairs of the Empire were in the hands of the militarism, the dual government, which lasted until as late as the time of Perry's visit, and which caused







no small confusion to the foreigners, was established. The Emperor still nominally the ruler of the people continued to enjoy<sup>3</sup> a peaceful life in Kyoto devoting his life to the promotion of esthetic culture. This court activity in artistic lines in the time when the whole country was in a state of continuous war, has had a great deal to do in preserving, promoting, and perpetuating the nation's artistic genius. The Shogun, on the other hand, a subject in name but the ruler in practice, exercised unlimited authority over the people and continued to do so until the Restoration in the year 1868.

The rise of military government naturally lowered the status of women. For the rule of the refined court presided over by the Empresses under which the graceful accomplishments<sup>i</sup> of women received their fullest meed, was substituted that of rough warriors, whose only admiration was given to fighting prowess, and to whom women appeared as creatures quite unworthy of equal honor with men. Women, therefore, were confined in homes, unable to take any part in social affairs, and all domestic services were left upon their shoulders while men engaged themselves in glorious military campaigns. Buddhism and Confucianism, having become by this time dominant powers, not only approved such treatment of women, but practically encouraged it. The Japanese women being completely subjugated by men during the thirteenth century continued to be so till the middle of the eighteenth. What<sup>2</sup> a tremendous change. such a long subjugation has caused in<sup>the</sup> inherently active, bright and happy-natured women of Japan, I shall state in a later section.

The long period of Feudalism is divided into two periods with the battle of Sekigahara in 1600 as a dividing point.



In this year a new family of Tokugawa came to rule the country as Shogun. Iyeyasu, the founder of the Tokugawa supremacy, was a far-sighted statesman. He revised the old system of feudalism, which <sup>had</sup> hitherto been greatly abused, and set up a system of government admirable in many respects. The lands were divided to Daimyos (Barons) who subdivided them to Samurais (Knights) and Samurais in turn let the farmers cultivate them. Each daimyo had to keep a certain number of samurais according to the size of his <sup>to</sup> allotted land. He had <sup>to</sup> spend a certain part of the year in Yedo and serve the Shogun, and on his return to his home, he had to leave his family in Yedo as hostage to the Shogun. This system prevented any possible rebellion of the daimyo. The class distinction was made clear, the daimyo being the noble class, the samurai, the leisure class exempted from any manual labor, while the farmers were placed next to the samurai and then the artisans, the merchants being placed at the bottom of social caste. Each class was given a distinct moral code applicable only within the class and to some extent even the daily modes of living such as the hour of sleeping and dress etc. were prescribed to each class by the government of Shogun or by the daimyos. Thus the daimyo was almost law unto himself, while the samurai was to behave according to the precept of Bushido, and other three classes had to live in conformity to the strict rules laid down by the lord. While the samurai could carry two swords and dress the hair in certain noble fashions and wore clothes made in an elegant style, the three lower classes could not carry a sword and had to dress the hair in less elaborate way and to don clothes made of coarse materials in a certain prescribed style.

The strict and minute rules above given are but a few







examples of the way in which the Tokugawa Bakufu governed the people. All other things, even the affairs within the homes such as the relation between husband and wife, and father and son were minutely prescribed making any deviation from them punishable by <sup>a</sup> severe penalty. Women were treated as inferior creatures incapable of independent dealings and were denied ~~of~~ all economical, social and educational privileges. They were made by law to obey <sup>their</sup> parents during childhood, husband after marriage, and children after old age. They were disciplined in <sup>the</sup> home by <sup>their</sup> parents to practice the so-called virtues of patience, self-sacrifice, and obedience based on the teachings of Confucius.

## 5 Meiji Era

Effective as the feudal system of Tokugawa was <sup>in</sup> its purposes, it failed to develop in accordance with the ever growing conditions of society. During <sup>the</sup> three centuries of its continuance, many changes took place including the increase of population, the growth of industry, and the intellectual advancement of the people in general. But the Bakufu, indifferent to the changing status of society, remained unchanged, rigid and crystallized. The incapacity of the time-worn system to cope with the growing tide of ~~the~~ social progress became manifest toward the middle of the eighteenth century when incidentally one of the ablest Emperors of Japan ascended to the Throne and proclaimed himself the legitimate ruler of the Empire. The attention of the whole nation was suddenly called to the long-forgotten Imperial Throne which had so long been eclipsed by the Shogunate. Several powerful daimyos immediately rebelled against the Bakufu and ran to the colors of the Emperor. Soon others followed their



example and the country was divided into two parties one supporting the Emperor and the other the Shogun. A civil war seemed almost inevitable. It was just at this critical moment of high tension that the celebrated Susquehanna and two other battleships of the United States of America made their appearance in the bay of Tokio.

The able leaders of the Bakufu skillfully diverted the attention of the nation to the new problem of opening Japan's door to foreign commerce. The whole country again was divided into two parties upon the new issue one insisting upon the status quo and the other advocating opening. Those who supported <sup>the</sup> Mikado took the former stand while the Shogun party chose the latter. In the face of such confusion, it was but natural that Commodore Perry should have felt an irritating delay of the Japanese government in answering his proposal. It was fortunate that the leaders of Bakufu were more enlightened and far-sighted than those of the Mikado party, for it was to them that Japan owes the peaceful entrance to the world relationship. These leaders, disregarding entirely the vigorous opposition of the majority, boldly signed the treaty promising the United States of America to open her seaports for the purpose of commerce. This act of the Bakufu brought about the final downfall of the Tokugawa regime but its value to Japan was immensely great, for had Japan refused to open her seaports, it was not certain just what might have been the path that the European nations were disposed to choose; even Perry, advised by the president to be strictly peaceful and courteous, threatened the nation more than once by stating that he would bombard the capital should the government refuse to







give a definite answer to the proposal offered by the President. The royalists after restoration soon perceived their mistake and entered into similar treaties with other European nations.

No sooner had Japan entered upon the world stage than she was completely surprised by the advanced conditions of the world outside. Now fully awakened, the nation threw aside her self-pride and began wholesale assimilation of the European civilization. It was fortunate that Japan had the ability to assimilate the advanced type of culture; so many peoples disappeared before the overwhelming tide of the new civilization. Many important social reforms were accomplished including the abolition<sup>5</sup> of feudalism, <sup>and</sup> establishment of <sup>the</sup> Imperial Government in Tokio. The Constitution prepared with great labor and after profound study of constitutional government elsewhere was put into force in the year 1890 and the Emperor opened the first Parliament in person. Industry of all kinds was encouraged, the systems of transportation and communication were improved, and military preparation was greatly strengthened. So wisely has the government conducted the rapid adjustment of the social conditions, and so zealously did the people work that after a brief period of half a century Japan came to enter the rank of the great powers.

Such a rapid progress, however, necessarily lacks unity and coherence; it was revolutionary rather than evolutionary and hence could not constitute well-rounded social advancement. Thus while a few factors were pushed up to the utmost point, the others were left totally neglected. While almost every thing was done for the development of industry, the protection of the interests of labor was utterly neglected; while a great stride has been made in education, nothing has been done to improve the moral



sense of the people. Many grave social problems arose out of such a confused state of affairs but none were so grave as those pertaining women. In the midst of national expansion and glorification, men passed unnoticed the disgraceful conditions under which women continued to suffer. General progress in society together with the influence of Occidental ideas awoke the women at last from a long lethargy. When they awoke, they found themselves economically in complete dependence on men, intellectually far behind the Occidental women, and politically without any power. The problems of the Japanese<sup>women</sup> arose when the hitherto parasitic and helpless women began to defy men and to claim a better opportunity for more significant living.





## II Characteristics of the Japanese Women.

If the Japanese people as a whole were products of the geographical conditions of Nippon, the Japanese women were the products of the past social condition of the Empire. Indeed, in physical as well as in spiritual characteristics, present Japanese women adequately represent the past social life through which they have developed. Physically, Japanese women are delicate, and graceful in manner. The healthy, robust physiques among women are not thought beautiful, nor are sprightly and bold manners regarded appropriate for women. These conceptions undoubtedly originated during the middle ages when the warrior's conception of an ideal woman was a sweet, docile, delicate damsel graceful and soft in manner, and pleasing in appearance. The guiding principle of Japanese art was always daintiness and delicacy and it was natural that the hardened knight of the middle ages engaged in constant warfare should demand the delicate, gentle woman to wait upon him at home. Hence the delicacy of body and grace of manner became in course of time the ideal of feminine beauty and women came to avoid all physical exercises which tended to toughen their physique. The result of such a wrong ideal manifests itself in frailty not only of the women but the nation as a whole.

The spiritual characteristics of the women reflect more truly the feminine ideals of the middle ages. The Nipponese women as they are to-day are extremely docile, obedient, sympathetic, dutiful, and sensitive to social approval. Every social institution of middle Japan enforced the obedience of women. Religion, family, government, public opinion, and ethical code all taught them that their supreme virtue was obedience not only



to superior men, but to all men. This explains why the women are so obedient today. The development of her sympathy has its explanation in the need of such virtue in past. The stern Samurais did not share much in family affection, throwing <sup>the</sup> whole duty of rearing children upon the shoulders of the women. Therefore upon <sup>the</sup> sympathy and love of the mother alone depended the welfare of <sup>the</sup> children. This from <sup>the</sup> necessity of the case tended to develop sympathy among women. The heightened sense of duty among the women too can be explained in a similar manner. While Samurais mostly stayed out of their homes, the women stayed at home and assumed the responsibility and discharged all kinds of duties without consulting men. This condition, while it made the men of Japan irresponsible, rendered the women very dutiful. Duty, moreover, was an essential teaching of Buddhism and Confucianism for women. The reason that the Japanese women are especially sensitive to public opinion can be explained by the fact that in the society of the middle ages women were treated with a severe and critical attitude and punished severely for slight misconduct. Such a social condition developed a sense of fear in women for any public criticism made on them. Consequently the Japanese women have a developed conscience called giri which is by far the strongest moral restraint of the women's behavior. Giri, in short, is a consciousness of a set of social taboos directed against the women. Deliverance from these taboos constitute the mightiest task of <sup>the</sup> modern woman's movement in Nippon.

Lafcadio Hearn admires the old type of Japanese women just described as "The most wonderful esthetic products of Japan."





and says that "A human creature so shaped for the service of gods and men that every drop of her blood is moral feeling, were not less out of place in the future world of competition and selfishness than an angel in hell." His admiration of Japanese women seems that of the women regarded as men's plaything. Japanese woman is wonderful, according to him, because she is "pretty like a comely child," her acts are "so graceful and modest," and "her supreme unselfishness, her childlike piety and trust" are never equaled by any other woman. Woman of this type perhaps make a good and obedient servant of man but Hearn in his absolute worshipping of things Japanese seems to have lost <sup>the</sup> critical capacity. Today an ideal woman is not one that makes a docile pet for man, blindly obedient, with childlike piety and trust, but she is the one who has a strong moral and intellectual faculty capable of thinking and judging and doing things not because others force her to do so, but because she believes it to be right. Nor do the men of Japan any longer agree with Hearn and lament the decrease of the old-fashioned women; they have already realized the urgent need of strong, capable women trained according to the western ideal of womanhood.

What has been said with regard to the virtues of the Japanese women must not be taken to mean that obedience, sympathy, trustfulness, and dutifulness are no longer necessary virtues for them. This has been the commonest error into which a silly type of so-called new women have fallen, and which caused the new women to be despised. On the contrary there is an increasing need for more of these <sup>virtues</sup> not only among the women of Japan but in the world at large. But the point is that the



Japanese women do not observe these splendid virtues because they think they are good but simply because they have been accustomed to observe them. In other words they automatically act as they are trained to act; hence their obedience is not reasoned out obedience but a blind obedience, their dutifulness too is mere doing of things as they must be done. It is quite doubtful whether such mechanical acting in accordance with social tradition can be well called a virtue; true virtue must be an outflowing expression of independent reasoning and judgement. A long subjugation has completely deprived the women of initiative and <sup>the</sup> faculty of independent thinking. The immediate task of improving the status of the women, then, must be education and training in sound and independent thinking.

So far Japanese women have been described as ignorant, weak, and inefficient creatures. But there is another side to the situation. The unfavorable social conditions in which the women were made to suffer did at least one good thing. The virtue of Kikotsu which is one of the most marked characteristics of the Japanese is a spirit of rebellion against any bully power. This spirit arose during the middle ages among the lower classes as reaction against the Samurais who treated them as if they were beasts. There appeared a class of defiant youths who made it their profession to rectify the wrongs of the Samurai and to defend the helpless common people. Many heroic women appeared who looked upon themselves as leading chivalrous spirits of their sex. This spirit of Kikotsu developed in the form of sympathy, altruism, justice, self-sacrifice, and heroism among the nation amply shared





by the women. Thus the women of Japan while being obedient, have <sup>a</sup>heroic spirit, and while timid in appearance, they have a latent spirit of defiance and independence. It is these traits that are furnishing motive power for the modern movement of the women.



## III Economic Problems

Japanese industry may be said to be in a transitional stage at present. The old system of home manufacture which is still prevalent is gradually being replaced by the rise of modern factories. Previous to the introduction of machinery, the industry of Japan largely consisted of artistic products such as chinaware, lacquer ware, embroidery, brocade, etc. Artistic as these goods were, the slowness of manufacture and the limitation of output made it impossible for the manufacturers to compete with similar goods made abroad by machinery. Gradually, therefore factory industry began to replace home industry and the number of factories grew rapidly in recent years. The following table will show the increase in number of factories in Japan.<sup>1</sup>

Year	No. of factory	Male worker	Female workers	Total
1900	2388	164,712	257,307	422,019
1905	4335	240,288	347,563	587,851
1910	6731	274,587	442,574	717,161
1914	10,334	378,596	540,656	919,252

Of the total of 10,334 factories in 1914, 8,541 are engaged in textile industries of filature, spinning, weaving, knitting, and braiding. The explanation of the fact that <sup>the</sup> textile industry has already become the most important one in the nation<sup>2</sup> is to be found in <sup>the</sup> ease with which motive power is obtained from numerous rapid rivers, in the historical development of the arts of weaving and spinning, in the abundance of cheap and skilled female

<sup>1</sup> Japanese government report for 1917

<sup>2</sup> Of the total export of Y. 1,127,468,280 in year 1915, Y. 579,187,551 or more than 50% is on textile manufacture.





operatives, and in the excellent market afforded by China.

The peculiarity of Japanese industry is the great number of female operatives. Of the total of 919,252 factory hands, 540,656 or nearly 60% are female. In <sup>the</sup> textile industry more than 80 per cent are female workers. Now what is the status of women labor in Japan? I shall first discuss wages.

# 1 Wages

Since the textile industry is the most important one in Japan, and since it employs a majority of the woman workers, I shall take it as a typical example. The Japanese yearbook for 1915 (p.311) gives the following statistics:

## Weaver's wages per day

Workers	1906	1910	1911	1912
Female	21 sen	27 sen	25 sen	27 sen
Male	42 "	49 "	43 "	43 "

In American money 27 sen is equivalent to  $13\frac{1}{2}$  cents and seems to be exceedingly small wages for a day's work. When we take into consideration the buying capacity of money, however, it does not seem so very low. In the United States \$ 800 is about the minimum cost of living for a year for a family of five<sup>1</sup>, but in Japan Y. 300, or less than one-fifth<sup>of</sup> that, has been found to be the minimum. Multiplying, therefore,  $13\frac{1}{2}$  cents by 5 we get  $67\frac{1}{2}$  cents. Taking this sum as the average of Japanese woman's wage, how does it compare with the wages of women abroad? A recent study of the wages of female workers in the United States concludes that 75 per cent of them receive less than \$ 8. weekly, 50 per cent less than \$ 6. and 15 per cent less than \$ 4.<sup>2</sup> In England the average

1 American Labor Year Book, 1917-18, p.163

2 Commons and Andrews, Principles of Labor Legislation, page 169.



wage of female wage-earner is 10 s.  $10\frac{1}{2}$  d. a week or 43 cents a day.<sup>1</sup> The purchasing capacity of 42 cents in England must be approximately equal to 75 cents to \$1. in America. The comparison shows that the wages are pretty nearly alike throughout. That such a low wage is not sufficient to sustain living does not need to be said. Generally speaking, female labor is subsidiary in its nature and from this reason it does not get equal pay with male labor for the same work. Beside the fact of <sup>the</sup> subsidiary nature of female work, the lower efficiency of women workers is regarded as a cause of the low wages for women. The latter explanation does not hold good in case of Japanese female operatives in factories. An expert makes the following statement:

"Though the Japanese skilled laborers command wages equal to those of Europe, it may broadly be stated that as to per capita output two to three Japanese skilled artisans correspond to one foreign. On the other hand when the comparison is made between female operatives of the two opposite sides, the relative position is reversed. One Japanese woman operative can easily turn out a work which requires in the west one and one third or even one and one half hands."<sup>2</sup>

This statement shows the relative efficiency of the female operative as compared with the male workers in Japan. But the wages for women are never more than a half that paid for men. In case of women's wages in Japan, therefore, we have an example where some other cause than that of inefficiency operates in holding down wages.

1 British Labor Year Book 1916 page 263-264

2 President Tejima of Tokio College of Technology,  
Japan Year Book 1916 page 331







The cause seems to lie in the peculiar policy of the government in industry. No government in the world, I think, is so friendly to the capitalist and unfair to the laborer. Being anxious to develop home manufacture, it has done all it can to foster the growth of national industry---it adopted a protective tariff to suit the producers, it subsidized several important industries, and it took the policy of extreme leniency in dealing with the factories. On the other hand it adopted the policy of ungenerous severity toward the laborer. The government never recognized the laborers' right to organize a labor union for the protection of their interests, and whenever an attempt for such a movement was made, it immediately interfered and killed off people's enthusiasm. The result is that the capitalist is given<sup>a</sup> free hand to control the wages of workers. He cannot cut the wages of men because their earnings go to support the families, so taking advantage of the subsidiary nature of female wages, cuts the wages of women to the lowest minimum.

## 2 Hours and conditions of work.

When the wages of female laborers of different countries were compared, it was found that there was not much difference among them. But it is when the elements of working hours and conditions are taken into consideration that the marked disadvantages of the Japanese women become manifest. A brief study of the factory regulation of the States in America shows the following fundamental agreements among the more progressive states: (1) that women shall not be made to work more than 8 hours per day, (2) that they should not be made to work between



8 p.m. and 6 a.m., (3) that they must not be put in dangerous work, (4) that a seat must be provided for each worker, and (5) that proper ventilation, sanitation, and other building facilities must be provided.<sup>1</sup> In Japan there is no regulation with regard to the hours of work. The following extract from the labor statistics published in 1915 by the government shows how many hours the ~~poor~~ Japanese women are made to work.

The working hours of the female operatives

Work	Average	mx.	min.	yearly work
Filature	13 hours	15 hours	11½ hours	257 days
Spinning	12 "	12 "	11 "	320 "
Weaving	12½ "	15 "	11½ "	308 "

An average of twelve hours a day is an enormously long time for women engaged in <sup>the</sup> above kinds of strenuous work especially when full night work is enforced at least once in a week. Now it becomes clear that for the same wage the women of Japan work four hours longer than their sisters in England and America.

How about the working conditions? It would be a mystery if the factory owners should pay any attention to the sanitary ~~or~~ other important conditions that safeguard the welfare of the workers in the total absence of governmental regulations. How bad the working and the dormitory conditions are, may be adequately shown by the following report made by an investigator:

"Female workers in Japanese factories number a half million of whom 300,000 are under twenty years of age. Out of this army of women operatives 400,000 are engaged in spinning, weaving, and dyeing industries. Seventy per cent of these women live in the factory quarters, which means a sort of confinement.

1 Senate report on conditions of women and childrens work





The work in the weaving mill often lasts from 14-15 hours. With regard to the spinning mills, female workers are put into night work every seven or eight days. Night work affects the health of workers severely. None can stand the strain for more than a year, when death, sickness, or desertion is the inevitable outcome. The consequence is that 80 per cent of the female workers leave the factories every year---but this loss is immediately replenished by new hands.

The food provided by the factory boarding house may be tolerable to the class---, but as to the other accommodation it is simply sickening. The women on the night and day shifts are obliged to share one bed which is neither aired nor dusted, and never exposed to the sun. Consequently consumption spreads among the operatives like an epidemic.

The number of women who are recruited as factory workers reaches 200,000 every year, but of these 120,000 do not return to the parental roof. Either they become birds of passage and move from one factory to another, or go as maids in dubious tea-houses, or as illicit prostitutes. Among the 80,000 women who return to homes something like 13,000 are found to be sick about 25 per cent of them being consumptive."<sup>1</sup>

The girl workers generally come from the country and as their earnings do not allow them to stay in rooming houses, they are kept in the boarding house run by the factory. Here they are given the worst kind of food and made to sleep in a bed which, as the report tells, is one of the most unsanitary kind. Beside two or three holidays a month in which girls must do all

1 Japan Year Book 1915 page 314



sorts of cleaning, toileting, etc., there is provided no means of amusement or recreation within the quarter. The girls, moreover, are not allowed to go to outside of the factory fence from the fear lest they desert without fulfilling the contract. This cuts the outside communication almost completely and renders the lives of the girls similar to those within prison walls.

It is beyond reasonable doubt that Japan's future depends on her success as an industrial nation. Agriculture has been the most important source of national subsistence until the present, but judging from the fact that the total area of Japan is only 156,674 square miles of which only 14 per cent is arable, and that the soil is pretty well exhausted, it is almost certain that the fifty million population of Japan with annual increase of half a million souls will not find comfortable living in agriculture. Just how to reconcile the incompatible facts of small area and increasing population is the capital problem which Japan must solve in near future.

There are two alternatives left for Japan to choose---one is to limit the increase of population and the other is to develop industry. The conscious control of population will undoubtedly come in vogue some time in the future but not until all other alternatives have been tried and failed. It is a well-known fact that the Japanese are exceedingly fond of children. The social custom of Japan encourages the paternal instinct of the Japanese. Personal ideals, public opinion, laws, beliefs, arts, traditions, education all tend to promote the instinctive desire to have many children. It is not likely, therefore, that the Japanese are going to consciously limit the population in the







near future to the extent of the French or the Americal nation. The only alternative for Japan to take at present seems to develop industry and thus to maintain a fairly high standard of living. Environmental conditions of Nippon favor such a course. Abundance of water power, of cheap labor, <sup>the</sup> insular condition of the country, developed maritime transportation system, make it appear that Japan may have an opportunity to become the England of Asia. She has moreover excellent sources of material supply in adjoining countries of China, Australia, and Malayan Archipelago. She has great markets for her wares in India, China, Australia, and America.

It is fortunate that the nation perceived this truth and directed her efforts to the promotion of industry especially after the Russian-Japanese war. But what has been the policy of the government in this regard? In <sup>its</sup> earnest desire to foster home industries and to encourage industrial enterprises, the government did almost every thing it could save that it seriously neglected to perceive the importance of protecting the laboring class. The result of the one-sided policy has already <sup>been</sup> manifested in a widening gap between the capitalistic and the working classes. If it is true, as I argued, that Japan's future depends on her industry, the most urgent task of the government today is not so much to protect capitalists as it is to adopt the policy of avoiding the struggle between the classes before it becomes too late. This, the government seems to think, can be done by keeping the laborer in ignorance and in helpless conditions, for how can we interpret otherwise the fact that it forbids the establishment of labor unions, and leaves them to be exploited by the



unscrupulous capitalists; that it allows the factories to make men and women and even children to work excessive hours under unsanitary conditions for so low wages? It remains to be seen how long such a one-sided and unjust policy will be tolerated by the laboring class and by the nation. It is to be earnestly hoped that the government of Japan will listen to public opinion and come to realize the importance of ~~of~~ protecting the interests and rights of the industrial group.

The first step that the government ought to take under present conditions is to allow the organization of a labor union with suitable governmental supervision if such be necessary. Next it must enact a factory regulation which will safeguard the health of workers not only of men but, above all, of women and children. About six years ago public opinion finally compelled the government to consider seriously the matter of factory regulation. Several plans were suggested but all met the vigorous opposition of the capitalist and the work was postponed until last year (1917) when finally a crude and almost ridiculous sort of factory law was drafted and put into practice. The law is said to apply to a factory employing not less than 15 operatives, and it provides (1) that children not more than 12 years of age shall not be engaged in work tho children above 10 may be employed in light work, (2) that male and female operatives not more than 15 years of age may not be made to work more than 12 hours per day, and night work between 10 p.m. and 4 a.m., (3) that the rest of at least 30 minutes should be given when the length of work exceeds 6 hours, and 1 hour when it exceeds 10 hours, and (4) that young children must not be put to unclean and dangerous conditions







of work. The law says at the end that the provision with reference to number of hours and ages shall not be enforced until 15 years after the enactment of the law. It is highly doubtful if such a law could improve the awful conditions of factories even to a slight extent; it seems as if it is hardly better than nothing. It is up to the nation now to realize the serious social effects of the bad factory conditions and to arouse public opinion for an improvement.

further

Now it is almost tautological to argue<sup>^</sup> for the necessity of protecting the interests of the laboring class. Labor is an important factor of production and it is obvious that its inefficiency will directly diminish<sup>the</sup> profits of the capitalists themselves and defeats the national purpose to develop industry. To leave the helpless men and women and children at the mercy of greedy capitalists and produce yearly thousands of disabled women and children is certainly<sup>a</sup> barbaric and shortsighted policy which no civilized nation dare to adopt. There is<sup>a</sup> prevalent belief among the people that the present factory conditions are<sup>the</sup> outcome of the international commercial competition to which Japan has been forced, in which the only strength that Japanese business men can rely upon is the cheapness of the Japanese labor. This pretext furnishes a good excuse for many unjust dealings with the working class. But they forget that cheap labor is not always economical, and that it is efficiency rather than cheapness of wage that counts in commercial competition. Now it is self-evident that the poor nutrition, bad working conditions, and excessive hours of work all tend to render labor inefficient. If so, it is to the interest of the capitalists to improve the



status of laborer. As to the social effects of those young women who suffer from the inhuman treatments by the factories and lose either health or moral integrity, it is too obvious to need mentioning.

### 3 Economic Independence of Women

So far I have dealt with the industrial problems of the Japanese women, now I shall take up the economic status of the women in general. The society of Japan as yet offers very little opportunity for economic independence of women. Besides factory works, there are various lines of employment for women such for instance as clerical, telephone and telegraph, and domestic service. But most of these positions are over-crowded by girls who work just for a few years toward getting ready for marriage, and who therefore, are willing to work for a very meager sum of money. This makes it impossible for women to start on an independent career in any manual work. There are several women who succeed as artists, musicians, poets, and novelists, but these are generally women of considerable independent means whose professions are not <sup>the</sup> primary source of their income. The society of Japan has not as yet reached the stage when female artists can start on a career without means. Teaching in primary and secondary schools has been favorite work of Japanese girls and, unlike other work, here the wages paid are sufficient for independence, but here again, demand is limited and only those who are especially gifted mentally or who can afford a thorough preparation can get the positions.

This lack of opportunity for women to start on independent careers is a great factor which tends to hold down the social





status of Japanese women. Until marriage, if a girl has no work by which to earn some money, she must depend upon her parents who might exercise a greater authority over her in <sup>the</sup> question of marriage, whereas, if she has <sup>the</sup> possibility of going into a career, she does not have to obey the unjust will of <sup>her</sup> parents. Many domestic maladjustments can thus be averted. The idea which prevails in Japan that every normal girl is supposed to marry comes from the fact that marriage is the only way by which a woman can guarantee her subsistence. It is not difficult to imagine what will be the status of women in marriage under such circumstances. A complete emancipation of women, therefore, cannot be brought about until some ways of economic independence are opened to girls.

Many difficulties must be overcome to achieve this end. In the first place women must improve their physique; Japanese women are too frail. The wrong notion of feminine beauty, together with food, and dress must be improved. Vocational training which will equip women for feminine work must be established. The old notion, Chinese in origin, of laughing at single women and of believing that it is a duty of women to get married and make home must be thrown aside. Self realization of individual value and <sup>the</sup> spirit of independence must appear in the women. Above all, broad, liberal education with the view to develop intelligence and thinking must be promoted among the girls.

When a girl marries a man, she becomes by law totally dependent in all ways upon her husband. It becomes necessary to obtain the permission of her husband in <sup>the</sup> conduct of legal act, and the control of her property goes to the hands of her husband.



The husband generally invests money and carries on business independently of his wife. The management of income, however, is totally left to the wife. The husband turns in all income to the wife and the wife, in turn, gives him a certain amount of monthly allowance. <sup>The</sup> expenditure of large sums of money is <sup>after</sup> done ~~by~~ the consultation of husband and wife but petty purchases are made in accordance to the wife's will. Generally speaking, in Japan it is a custom to regard marriage as more than a mere contract; it is the joining of two persons into a solid whole in which possessions of either one are not sharply distinguished from those of the other, but both regard not only each other's material possessions, but even spirit as belonging to both.





## IV Matrimonial Problems

## 1 Marriage

The object of the greatest complaint among the young people of Japan is the prevalent system of consummating marriage.. Quite contrary to the great freedom in <sup>the</sup> question of marriage enjoyed by the young people of America, marriage in Japan is largely conducted by the parents. This custom is unavoidable in the society of Japan where young men and women are not allowed to associate freely, where education of men and women is carried on in separate schools, and where the old concepts of Confucian morality prohibit gathering of respectable young men and women in one place for the purpose of mutual acquaintance. Parents, therefore, get busy by the time their children reach marriageable age and quietly begin to search for a suitable youngman or woman, as the case may be. If an ideal candidate is found, they ask a certain respectable couple among their intimates to come in and take up the task of go-between. This office is generally willingly accepted as it is regarded as an honorable task. After a careful consultation with the parents, the go-between makes a visit to the family of the candidate and delivers the message with which he is entrusted in the most careful, polite, and indirect manner. If the second party is not interested in the proposal, they make some kind of excuse, reasons generally being "She is still a baby" or "She is not quite strong at present" or in case of a youngman, "He is still only a boy and does not know how to support a family" etc. If, however, they are interested in it, they ask many details with reference to the disposition, education, ideal of life etc. of the person in question. The go-between generally informs them with truth but not always.



From his desire to see the undertaking a success, he often makes a false story or exaggerates things applying <sup>the</sup> psychology of suggestion most freely and successfully. After the interview, the go-between returns to the first party and reports what took place in the visit, and asks for further instructions. After this, the go-between makes several calls on both parties for further conference and develops the consummation. In the meantime, careful parents hire some tactful person to investigate as to whether the reports of the go-between are all true. This person visits the neighbors or the relatives of the other party and gets as much informations as possible. An inquiry is often made of the health and heredity of the person from the family physician. If some undesirable facts are discovered, the proposition may be wholly dropped upon some pretense, but if otherwise, a date is set on which the two parties for the first time meet together. The young persons are accompanied by their mothers and the meeting is smoothly conducted by the go-between couple. This meeting is called Miai (seeing each other) and is usually held in a quiet tea-house in a park or in a theater. The final decision is made after this meeting. Nearly seventy cases out of a hundred result in failure. If both parties are satisfied after the Miai, then an exchange of expensive presents is made, which means the actual engagement of the young persons. The marriage ceremony soon follows and the bride goes to the family of the bridegroom to live.

It is quite natural that the young people of Japan are not satisfied with such an old-fashioned marriage system as above described. It gives no opportunity for them to know deeply







about each other's character and ideals before marriage. The natural process of mutual understanding, love, and marriage is reverted to marriage first, then, understanding, and finally love. Love, however, does not always follow understanding; disappointment too often takes love's place, and causes divorce. One reason of the high percentage of divorce in Japan is certainly to be found in this way of conducting marriage.

However, the Japanese method of conducting marriage is not altogether without merit. Freedom in love and marriage is the life of the young people and must be defended with all cost. But we all know that the young age means little experience and plenty of emotion. Even the young Americans who enjoy all facilities and liberty of social training, who have well developed common sense, often make mistakes in marriage and cause many tragedies. It is too much to expect young lovers to consider each other's heredity before engagement. But parents, having experienced all problems of life, and knowing the dispositions of the children, may often make better judges than the excitable young people.

The best way seems to be a wise combination of the freedom of the young people with the careful supervision of the parents. It is beyond argument that the young people of Japan ought to be given a greater right in choice of their life companions, and that they must be allowed to associate more freely in society under chaperonage. Some maintain that the Japanese young people are especially emotional and therefore are not entitled to associate freely between opposite sexes. That the Japanese boys and girls are easily infatuated is true



but the cause of it is the lack of this very association. Fortunately the more enlightened class of people in Japan have recently come to realize the importance of providing some means for respectable association between youngmen and women. Old fashioned people still uphold, however, the classic doctrine of Confucius and vigorously oppose such a movement. There is general apprehension lest sudden removal of the barrier between the young people bring about their moral decadence. It may be possible that at the beginning the society may be obliged to pay a certain sacrifice but in the course of years the benefits derived from it will surely outweigh the evil which it produces. A greater freedom for the young people with a moderate amount of parental supervision will improve the status of marriage and diminish the number of divorces and domestic tragedies.

## 2 Divorce

In America there is one divorce for every twelve marriages; in Japan there is one for every seven. This is certainly an abnormally high percentage. It is not necessary here to point out the causes of the great number of divorces in America. The causes of a high percentage of divorce in Japan are many and complicated. The system of marriage just described in which the young people are often compelled to marry against their will is apparently one of them. Another reason is the collision between new and old ideals. Modern women, being educated in advanced schools and knowing the ideals of the Western women, stay no longer a mere servant of men; they demand a better treatment and respect. There are many conservative men who still insist on the treatment of women after the fashion of the middle ages. Sharp collisions of ideals occur between them and divorce





results if neither succeeds in convincing the other. Financial difficulty is a common cause of divorce. In Japan, owing to the recent economic transition in which development of industry gave rise to plutocracy and poverty, the middle class suffered tremendously. The latter class having been accustomed to the high standard of living, cannot easily change the modes of living, hence suffer all the more from the pressure of the high cost of living. The great number of divorces among the middle class is partially due to this economic difficulty. Another reason is to be found in the loose condition of laws which sanction marriage and divorce. Legally the only act required to make the marriage effective is the withdrawal of the bride's name from the list of her father's family as registered by the government, and its entry upon the register of her husband's family. In case of divorce there are two ways of effecting it: either by mutual agreement of husband and wife to have the registration of marriage cancelled, or by appeal to law suits on several grounds specified in the civil code. The ground on which judicial divorce is granted include bigamy, adultery, on the part of wife, the husband's receiving a criminal sentence for the similar offence or some other crimes, cruel treatment or grave insult such as to render living together unbearable, desertion etc. There are very few example of the divorce effected by law suits in Japan; the majority being settled by mutual agreement between wife and husband and their relations.

Another great cause of divorce is the Cofucian conception on this subject which still lingers in the mind of the older generations and the conservatives. Confucius taught seven



grounds of divorcing wife, which were (1) disobedience to parents-in-law, (2) failure to bear a son, (3) adultery, (4) jealousy of her husband, (5) leprosy, (6) garrulity, and (7) theft.<sup>1</sup> Some of these teachings are not observed today, but a few--especially the first-----are still believed as legitimate grounds for the divorce of the wife. Among the old-fashioned families it is not uncommon to divorce otherwise a perfect wife simply on the ground of her barrenness or of her failure to obey the parents-in-law. The divorce of this kind becomes illegal if the woman resorts to the protection of the civil code, but in most cases she knows little or nothing of her legal rights, and even when she does know, she has seldom the self-assertion to make a stand for them, but merely submits to the dictates of those whom she is bound by custom to respect and obey without question.

The greatest cause of divorce in Japan, however, is found in the peculiar system of patriarchal family as old in its origin as the history of the nation. The father is the head of the family and his sons live with him with their wives and children. It is not uncommon in the old cities of Nagoya and Kyoto to see families in which two or three or even more couples with their children live together. The modern tendency is for the sons and daughters, with the exception of the eldest son, to leave the paternal roof and start out new households for themselves. But the eldest son, or in case there is no son, the eldest daughter, who inherit the household of the father must live with the parents untill the death of the latter.

1 Confucius, The Elder Tai's Record of Rites (bk.XXX)





The majority of family troubles and tragedies occur in families of this kind where the parents and the young couple dwell in the same house. It is of course due to the universally notorious relationship between the parent-in-law and the bride. It is the custom of Japan for the father to retire when his son starts out on his career and becomes able to support him, even when he has not reached to the age of sixty, and to indulge in artistic or ceremonial pursuits. This is, in my opinion, a most unproductive custom and a source of domestic evils. Strange enough, the social opinion and law protect the retired couple who have bequeathed their "patria potestas," and so strong are these laws and customs that the parents have prior claims on son's support even to those of his own wife and children. These retired parents take it as the matter of course that the wife of their son should wait on them with utmost devotion. They, moreover, often get jealous and cause all sorts of domestic troubles making the life of the young wife exceedingly unhappy and painful. Sharp collision of ideals occur between the old people and the young bride from the difference of their educations and moral conceptions. A wife may be a good woman, faithful to her husband but if, under the the training given her, she does not adapt herself readily to the traditions and customs of the family she enters, it is more than likely that she may be sent back as "persona non grata," and even her husband's love cannot save her. Under no circumstance, therefore, does she marry to be a mistress of a house with absolute control over all her little domain as American girl's do. Serious tragedies often occur from the maltreatment of the young wives by the parent-in-law. The government



statistics of suicide for the year 1914 show that 235 young women committed suicide in that year purely from the domestic troubles of this kind.

Now the divorce caused by the awakening of women, and by the disagreement between the ideals of husband and wife is quite excusable and even to be promoted as long as the abnormal process of marriage prevails. But the merciless divorcing of wives on the grounds of old Confucianism, and the caprice of the retired parents is, to say the least, barbarous. Not only the women but the entire younger generation must arise and defy the practice of such injustice, and endeavor to remove the causes of the domestic maladjustment. In order to safeguard the happiness and welfare of a wife, the civil code concerning marriage and divorce must be revised making their sanction more stringent. The practice of retiring must be condemned by public opinion, and the law which supports such a foolish custom must be repealed. A careful study reveals the fact that deep in the bottom of domestic maladjustment lurks the conflict between old doctrines of Buddhism and Confucianism on one hand, which have already become incapable of satisfying the consciences of the younger generations, and on the other the western ideals of individual liberty and democracy, which appear very radical and even dangerous to the eyes of the ~~old~~ older generations. The old teachings are still deep-rooted in the minds of the people in general, and are formidable in their power. Slowly but surely, however, the newer ideals of freedom and equality are gaining power to win, ere long, the approval of the entire nation. The wider dissemination of Christianity will surely hasten this triumph. It is an unfortunate fact that the foreign missionaries who have preached





the gospels in Japan have in general been of a narrow-minded type who held a rigid, orthodox view of religion, and who lacked the ability and sympathy to see the real problems of the people, and to adapt Christianity to suit the social conditions of Japan. It is a sign of hope, however, that recently many bright youths have taken up in their own hands the spreading of the teachings of Christ.

### 3 Household Problems.

Another serious problem that awaits solution is that of household adjustment. In the first place, the woman's burdens of household drudgery must be reduced. The Japanese housewives are perhaps the busiest ones in the world; they have to take care of so many things. Since Japanese are very particular about cleanliness and orderliness of surroundings, it is custom for a wife to get up every morning at least a few hours ahead of her husband, and to do all sorts of house cleaning. She does, besides all the cooking, washing and dress-making by herself. In a big family, several servants are kept but here again the wife is the chief of servants and works together with them, for such a large family is bound to have many things to be done. Whenever a guest calls, it is a strict social custom of Japan that he should be treated with utmost hospitality and minute care by the mistress of the family. In an old country like Japan there are numerous little social customs to be carried on from time to time, for instance, exchange of presents at certain seasons with the neighbors and relatives, observance of religious ceremonies, etc., all of which require a great deal of thought and care and are really a trying task for the housewife.



Then there are old folks to be waited on, and young children to be well taken care of. The Japanese generally take a great deal of care---almost too much---in training children, which task, of course falls solely upon the shoulders of the fond mother. The husband is almost always a big baby quite unable to do even little personal things without the help of his wife. All these thousands of things must be done every day throughout the year. In observing the domestic conditions of Japanese homes, one can but wonder how a delicate woman can do all this painful amount of work, and <sup>must</sup> deeply sympathize with her.

The result of such a heavy burden on woman in the home is simply disastrous to the nation. As the consequences of ceaseless labors and cares, a Japanese wife has no leisure hours to spare for the purpose of culture. There are many well-educated women whose intellectual interests have not been quite lost, and who want earnestly to spare a little time every day for studies, but who are unable to do so from their heavy tasks and minute cares. The consequences are that wives come to regard their homes as their supreme domains, and to ignore the existence of greater society outside the home, and that they become gradually narrow, ignorant, and unsocial. This, in turn, makes the home atmosphere less pleasant and less attractive and often drives men away from home. Now home is the most important school for children, and mother is their teacher. But if the mother lacks the knowledge of the broader society, how can she train and educate her children in ideal way? Again, <sup>the</sup> unsociable and tactless character of Japanese ladies makes it necessary for society to <sup>have</sup> a class of professional entertainers known as Geisha,





whose presence there has been the source of moral disturbance. Whenever I attend an American party and observe refined, tactful, dignified, and pleasing ladies entertaining the party, I cannot help envying American society which has so many women of such resources. The greatest loss, however, that the Japanese nation suffers from the confinement of women in their homes is the dearth of feminine elements in social and national activities. It no longer remains disputable that woman's sharing in the affairs of society promotes philanthropic works, improves the moral status of society, and adds to the pugnacious instinct of man a saving element of sympathy and love. The Japanese society goes without these splendid contributions of the fair sex. It is evident, therefore, that a great task of modern Japan is the socialization of homes through the exemption of housewives from incessant domestic drudgery.

Many things must be done in order to emancipate the women from home confinement. First of all, <sup>the</sup> old Confucian doctrine which teaches that a wife should be a servant of her husband and his family must be, once for all, given up. Japanese men ought to be ashamed of their being so helpless without their wives to help them. They must realize that they are the stronger sex, and that they must protect and help the weaker sex, instead of making them wait on them. In a family unable to keep a helper, the husband must at least do the heavy work not to say anything about taking care of his own little personal concerns. Then again the system of home management must be rationalized; many foolish traditions and conventions which are retained and observed simply because they are customs, and which cause a great



deal of work for the housekeeper must be subjected to rational selection or rejection; and home management must be conducted on the basis of domestic science. This new science which has achieved a remarkable development both in theory and application must be extensively taught in <sup>the</sup> schools and homes of Japan.

Lastly the significance of parental responsibility must be fully realized by men and women. As I stated before, the Japanese are exceedingly fond of children and from this reason they have in general large families, in many cases quite beyond their capacity properly to rear. The consequences are, heavy burdens thrown upon the the parents, miserable careers for the children, and often the evil practice of irresponsibly giving children away to other families which are sometimes doubtful in reputation. This is the clear ~~case of~~ paradox that while they are fond of children, they are at the same time irresponsible parents. Conscious limit~~ation~~ of the number of family seems necessary, not only from the standpoint of national policy, as I have already pointed out, but also from that of reducing woman's excessive burdens in the home.





## V Problems of Education

### 1 History

Education worthy of the name in Japan has been of quite recent origin. It is true that as early as the 12th century men were taught to read Chinese classics, and to compose poetry. Elaborate moral doctrines embodied in Bushido were taught and enforced among the upper class. But all these teachings were limited to the aristocrats and were generally carried on in individual families. The mass of common people followed the hereditary professions of their families and their education consisted only of learning the trades. During the Tokugawa regime, an attempt at the establishment of a higher educational system was made and, as its result, the Seido Institution was established at Yedo (now Tokio) in which the knight class were educated in Chinese literature, history, and ethics. This example was soon followed by the feudal lords who established many similar institutions in their domains. It was these local institutions, or Jukus as they were called, especially those of Mori and Shimazu, that turned out so many heroes who bore the torch and led the nation safely out of the general confusion during the critical moment of Restoration. Even under this improved state of education, its privilege was limited to the higher class only; the children of the plebeian classes being given merely a brief training of reading and writing simple alphabets in Buddhist temples called Terakoya by the monks.

As the education of the common people was sadly neglected, so was that of women. It is true that in the patrician families girls received fairly good education in history, art, literature,



and morality but the girls of less privileged classes received no intellectual training whatsoever. If anything was taught them at all it was <sup>the</sup> traditional moral obligations of women which forced them to obey parents and husband, and to respect men and the aged. A book called Onna Daigaku (Higher Learning for women) written by Ekken Kaibara which set forth rigid rules of conduct with reference to womanly virtues, womanly forms<sup>of</sup> address, womanly deportment, and womanly services, was made the bible of women and its contents, the guiding principles of female training. In marked contrast to the lack of liberal education, the training in the womanly duties---sewing, weaving, cooking, the arts of tea-serving and flower-arranging were carried on with great deal of enthusiasm and social approval. Practical affairs of daily life rather than intellectual enlightenment were the main object of girl's education till the opening of the new era.

When Japan threw aside the old policy of isolation and entered into the world politics, she was taken by complete surprise to contemplate an advanced state of education in Europe. This surprise coupled with the keen realization of the importance of intellectual enlightenment, whetted Japan's appetite for an educational system. Immediately, therefore, extensive investigations on the educational systems of European countries were made and after a careful consideration about the applicability of such systems to the society of Japan, a plan after the French model was adopted in the year 1872. According to this plan, the whole country was to be divided into 8 educational districts, each to establish one university, 32 middle schools, and 6720 primary schools. The plan was premature, however, and was recast





the in year 1879 by the advise of Dr. David Murray, an American educationist who was an adviser to the Ministry of education from 1879 to 1897. A definite reconstruction of <sup>the</sup> educational system was started in the year 1885 when Viscount Mori, as the minister of education, assumed the whole task. He possessed keen insight into the problems of education and it is to him that Japan owes the laying of the foundation for her recent educational progress. It may be well to add here the fact that the visit to America of two of the gretest national leaders, Kido and Okubo, who returned to Japan afterwords with a new inspiration, gave a strong impetus to the early movement of national education.

The name Fukuzawa is dear to every school girl of Nippon, for it was he who first recognized the necessity of education for women, and most ably spread its propaganda. Partly convinced by the logical argument of Mr. Fukuzawa, and partly stimulated by the advanced state of girl's education abroad, the government stated girl's education on an admirably large scale and with decidedly radical spirit. Subsequently women's education prospered steadily for about ten years, 1884-1892, when the period of reaction came, the main cause of which was the alleged tendency to family disintegration due to collision of the ideals of the old and the new. The fact was that the girls suddenly realized, as the result of higher education, their unfavorable social position, and began to assert their rights. This self-assertion was perfectly natural and there was nothing to despise about it; but the trouble was that it was often carried too far without due consideration for the facts of their own immature



intellect and accomplishment, and for the old generation who still cherished the ancient idea of perfect obedience for women which had so long been in vogue. This reaction was certainly an unfortunate event in the annals of female education in Japan; it reverted the new ideal of girl's education which had been achieved with much pain and sacrifice to the old one in which the training for domestic service was thought all that is necessary to make "good wives" and "wise mothers." At present, tho somewhat improved, the underlying principle of girls' education is still the same, that of training them for serviceable housewives rather than for the broader and richer life of modern women.

## 2 Present system of education in Japan.

I shall now give a general outline of the present educational system in Japan and point out certain features which call for immediate reform.

Educational institutions in Japan are of two kinds, one is public; the other private. Since it has been the policy of the government to establish a complete national educational system under direct control of the ministry of education, private enterprises for education have not been encouraged. Consequently there are not many private schools for liberal education, most of them being for vocational or religious education. There are a few private universities, however, which keep the standard fairly comparable with the first class universities in the United States of America. The public schools fall under three categories: (1) Those for general or liberal education, (2) those for technical or vocational education, and (3) those for special education which includes peer's school where the aristocrats





are educated and the blind and the deaf are trained. The first class comprises by far the greatest number of institutions and is the backbone of the national education. No less important, however, is the second or technical education which has made remarkable strides in recent years. The third class is subsidiary education and is not very important. The military academies are supported by the military bureau independently of the Department of Education.

The public schools for general education consist of elementary schools, middle schools or secondary schools, high schools, and imperial universities. In elementary schools boys and girls are educated together but above ~~these~~ they are separately educated in schools widely differing ~~between them~~ in subjects of studies and in the standard of scholarship.

The elementary schools are divided into ordinary elementary schools and higher elementary schools, a school of each of these two grades commonly being held in the same building. The ordinary elementary school course extends over six years and is compulsory since 1908, and the higher elementary course, over two or three years. The elementary course receives children of six to fourteen and teaches the following subjects:

#### Curriculum for the first 4 years

Japanese Language, 12 hours per week.  
 Morals, 2 hours per week.  
 Arithmetic (simple arithmetic), 6 hours per week.  
 Drawing, 2 hours per week.  
 Singing  
 Manual works  
 Sewing (for girls only)

#### Curriculum for the second 4 years

Japanese language and composition, 10 hours per week



Morals, 2 hours per week  
 Arithmetic (advanced arithmetic), 4 hours per week  
 History and geography, 3 hours per week  
 Science (plants, animals, minerals, and natural phenomena)  
     3 hours per week  
 Drawing, 2 hours per week.  
 Singing and gymnastics, 5 hours per week.  
 Elective subjects (agriculture, commerce, and English)  
     3 hours per week

For years the government has taken special pains to complete the system of elementary education and its result has been shown in the high percentage of school attendance as shown in the diagram on page 64, and in wide dissemination of education among the people. The following is the governmental report of the status of elementary education in Japan for 1917.

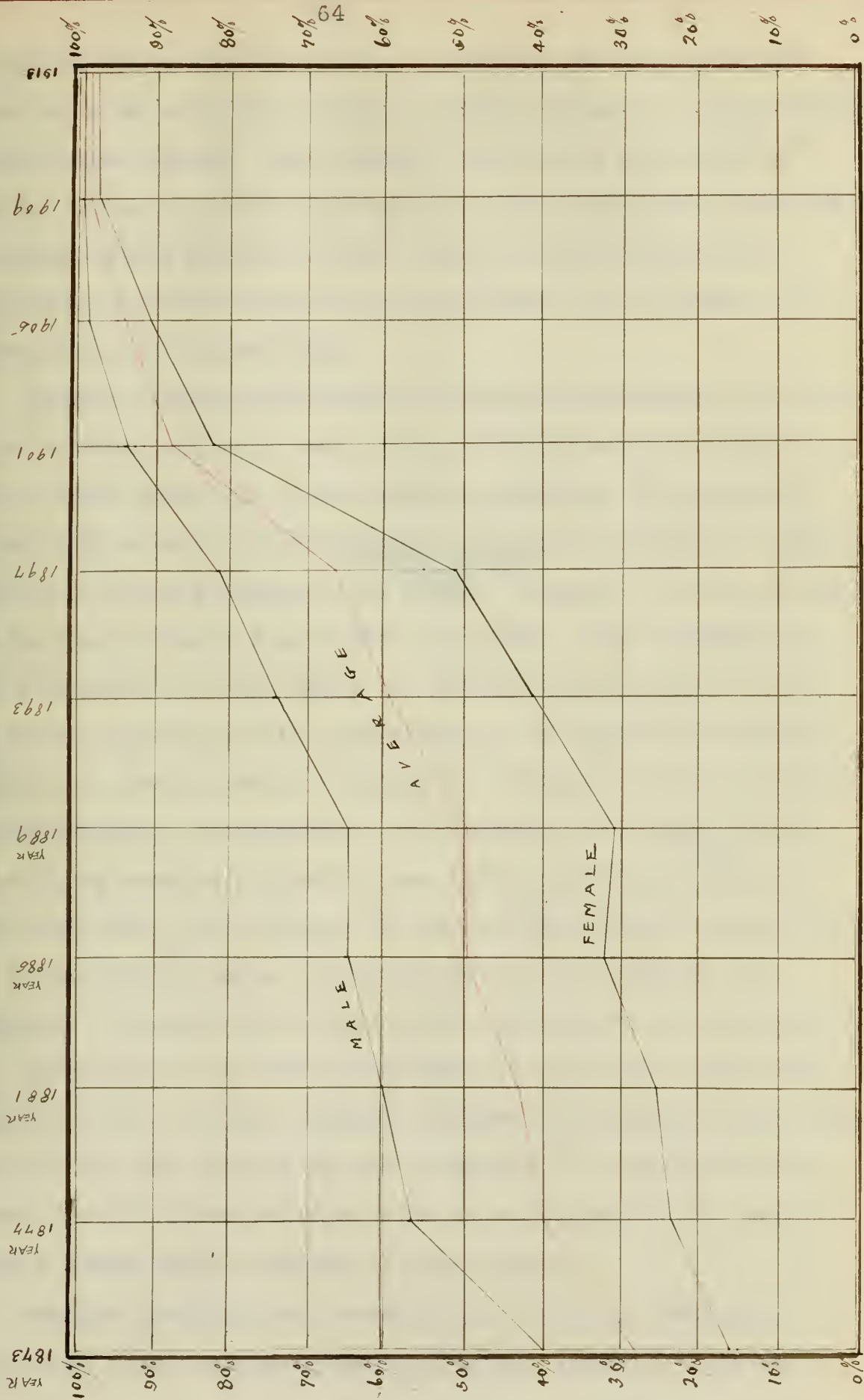
No. of schools	Teachers		Students		
	male	female	male	female	total
25,519	115,106	44,648	3,887,854	3,375,879	7,263,753

After the elementary school comes the middle school which is equivalent to high school in America. A school of this grade teaches boys who are desirous of entering higher institutions or who go directly into active life. A graduate of a middle school is privileged to become a clerk in the governmental service without undergoing a civil service examination. The course of study extends over for 5 years and a boy who has finished primary school education is qualified theoretically to enter a middle school on diploma. But in practice, owing to the number of applicants far exceeding the available accommodations, the applicant is obliged to undergo a selective examination and the average of the past 5 years shows that only 65 percent of the total number of applicants have been admitted during these years.





# THE PERCENTAGE OF SCHOOL CHILDREN WHO WERE RECEIVING INSTRUCTION FOR THE LAST FORTY-ONE YEARS



AFTER THE REPORT OF THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION FOR 1916. JAPAN.

RECEIVED BY THE DIRECTOR, BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT  
JANUARY 1964

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JANUARY 1964

Above the middle schools or secondary schools there are higher schools which are similar in many respects to the colleges in The United States. The student desirous of entering the Imperial University has to study in a high school for three years. At present eight schools of this kind are maintained by the government, and the courses are as follows; (a) literary, (b) scientific, and (c) medicine.

Imperial Universities are the highest educational institutions in Japan and at present there are four such institutions, one in Tokio being the oldest and most famous. The graduate of the high school is theoretically entitled to enter an Imperial university without examination, but in practice, a rigid entrance examination is imposed upon the applicants. The examination is most difficult in Tokio where the applicants outnumber by far the actual capacity of the university. The Imperial University of Tokio is made up of six colleges : college of law, of medicine, of engineering, of literature, of science, and of agriculture, and had 384 members of faculty and 5,094 students in <sup>the</sup> academic year 1913-1914. The college of law includes four courses namely, law in the strict sense, politics, political economy, and commerce. Formerly the course of the college of law extended to four years but in the year 1914 when the privilege which the graduate of the college formerly enjoyed of entering either the Bench or the Bar on diploma was withdrawn, it was made three years like all other colleges with an exception of the medical college whose course extends to four years.

Besides the Imperial Universities there are technical schools to which students may be admitted directly from the





secondary school without college preparation. These include medical schools, higher commercial schools, higher technical schools, agricultural and forestry schools, foreign language school, fine arts academy, academy of music, and higher normal schools etc. These technical and vocational schools have all been recently established and are crowded, reflecting an increasing demand for such training.

Besides the public schools and universities above described, there are many private schools which are, by no means, inferior in any respect to those of the government. There are numerous technical and vocational schools supported by the private citizens or by the cooperations, which turn out every year to society many useful artisans and professional men. Of all private educational institutions, universities flourish the most. This is to be explained first by the limited number of students admitted to the Imperial Universities and the strict rules attached to the entrance thereto, and second by the efficiency and the prevalent democratic spirit in the private universities. There are nearly a dozen of such universities throughout the country, the most famous among them being Waseda and Keio both of which are the true birth-places of Japanese democracy.

So much, then, for the male education in Japan. This has been presented as the necessary background to contrast with the education of women which I shall now describe. The educational system for girls is much simpler than that for boys, Girls' schools maintained by the government are elementary and high schools for liberal education; and normal schools for vocational education. In elementary schools boys and girls are educated



together, as I have already stated, and six years of attendance is compulsory for both sexes.

Girl's high schools are supposed to be equivalent to the middle schools or secondary schools for boys but their standard is much lower than that of boys' middle schools. The course of study here extends for four years with a post graduate course of two years. The following is the comparison of the curricula of secondary schools for boys and girls.

Curriculum of boy's middle school

Subjects	1st year hours per week	2nd year hours per week	3rd year "	4th year "	5th year "
Moral	1	1	1	1	1
Japanese and Chinese	7	7	7	6	6
English	6	6	6	7	7
Hist. and Geog.	3	3	3	3	3
Mathematics	4	4	4	4	4
Natural science	2	2	2	2	--
Physics & Chem.	--	--	3	3	4
Civil Government or Economics	--	--	--	--	2
Drawing	1	1	1	1	4
Gym. & Singing	4	4	4	3	3
Total hours	28	28	31	30	34





## Curriculum for Girl's High School

Subjects	1st year hours per week	2nd year "	3rd year "	4th year "
Moral	2	2	2	2
Japanese	6	6	5	5
English	3	3	3	3
Hist. & Geog.	3	3	2	3
Mathematics	2	2	2	2
Natural History	2	2	2	1
Drawing	1	1	1	1
House keeping	--	--	2	2
Sewing	4	4	4	4
Music	2	2	2	2
Gym. & Etiquette	3	3	3	3
Total hours week	28	28	28	28

Notice the significant fact that while in both schools morals are taught, in girls' schools two hours per week are spent for it whereas in boy's schools only one hour is required, and that while there is no marked difference between the subjects of studies provided in both curricula, there is a marked difference in the number of hours per week designated for each study. Only half as many hours per week are provided for girls on the subjects of English, mathematics, sciences; and there is no course on civics or civil government for girls as in <sup>the</sup> case for boys. The public system of liberal education for girls ends here and there is no provision for higher education for girls since they are not admitted either to the national college or to the imperial university. There were 346 girls' public high



schools with 90,009 students in the year 1915.<sup>1</sup>

In April of the year 1901 there appeared a girl's university in Tokio to make up this grave deficiency. The Nippon Women's University, as it was named, was founded by private citizens of foresight who perceived the necessity of higher liberal education for girls. This university offers at present four courses in household science, literature, pedagogy, and foreign languages and is considering the establishment of three more courses in the near future in physical education, music, and fine arts. Mr. Naruse, who made a careful study of woman's education abroad especially that of America, is the president of the institution. The university had 527 students enrolled in year 1913.

A report reaches me as I am writing this thesis that another girl's university is just to make its appearance in Tokio with a lady president, Miss Yasui who is a Christian and who has studied pedagogy in the United States. The university is founded by the native Christians of all denominations and provides four courses: (1) English literature, (2) Japanese and Chinese literature, (3) Humanistic education, and (4) Household science. Dr. Nitobe, a promoter of the project, gives an explanation of the course number (3) by saying that "This course is provided with the aim of making a woman a useful member of society." It is to be sincerely hoped that a project of this kind will meet the approval of the people, as no doubt it will, and be followed by many enterprises of a similar kind.

1 Three girls were admitted to the scientific dept. of Tohoku Imperial University and they graduated in good average grades a few years ago. But somehow this noble precedence was discontinued by the government.

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This leads me to consider the relationship between Christian missionaries and the girls' education in Japan. In the Womens' Central Review (published in Japan) there is found an article by Dr. Nitobe in which he writes: "I cannot read without the feeling of pity and contempt the books on the educational history of Japan, in which much credit is given to the government for the progress of national education but no mention is made of the private citizens who have rendered valuable service in the promotion of Japanese education---I mean especially the foreigners. Whatever view one may hold with regard to the Christian religion, one must admit that it was Christian missionaries that first opened the way for the modern system of education---it is to their untiring efforts that we owe our educational ideal and progress for girls." In fact it was these Christian missionaries <sup>who</sup> first led us to realize the importance of female education, and it was American Board of Commission for Foreign Missions that first established in Japan a girl's school after the American model. We have at present nearly a dozen well-known girl's Christian schools and many smaller ones scattered all around the country. Aoyama Jogakuin, Joshi Gakuin, Rikko Jogakuin of Tokio; Doshisha Jogakko of Kyoto; Jogakuin of Kobe; Baika Jogakko of Osaka; Kyoritsu Jogakko of Yokohama are institutions which have long been maintained by the mission boards, and which, as girl's schools, can well compete with some of the best American Girl's denominational schools in their ideals, and efficiency, and which have created many female leaders of modern Japan.

America furnished many famous educators who rendered valuable services as teachers at these institutions or as the advisers to



the government. It was America which trained some of our greatest woman educators. For example Miss Tsuda, the foremost leader of girl's educational movement in Japan was sent to the United States in the year 1871 with a group of young ladies to study the system of liberal education for girls. There are many Japanese girls who are anxious to study in American institutions but the immigration law unfortunately now forbids their entrance to this country. It is to be deeply regretted that America's valuable service in extending the spirit of democracy through girl's education should be hampered simply on account of the narrow policy of the Immigration Bureau.

A few things may be said with regard to special education for girls. Of all vocational education, training for teachers occupies the most prominent part. The government zealously undertook to develop normal school education. The law requires that each locality should maintain at least one normal school with an elementary school attached to give practical training to the student in method of instruction. The course of study of each normal school extends for four years. The students are allowed parts of the necessary expenses incurred during the school years for which in return, those who accept this aid are under obligation to continue in service as teachers for eight years. There are nearly 100 such schools with a total of 30,000 students. Above the normal schools there are two girl's higher normal schools one in Tokio and the other, in Nara intended to make up the deficiency in female education which arises from the lack of higher liberal educational institutions. There are many private schools including those for training in etiquette and decorum, but vocational





education for girls is one thing which as yet foreign to Japan.

### 3 Problems of Reform

Even this brief outline reveals many weaknesses in the present system of education in Japan. Ever since President Elliot of Harvard visited Japan a few years ago and called the attention of scholars to the grave defects of Japanese education, there has been aroused much excitement among the thinkers of Japan and a call for radical reform. At present a committee chosen by the government is making an investigation with the view to make some modifications of the system. The first notable defect is too many years that are required to finish regular education. A boy has to spend 8 years in elementary school, 5 years in middle school, 3 years in high school, and 3-4 years in university. Supposing he enters elementary school at the age of 6 and passes successfully all the entrance examinations, he will be 25 by the time he gets through the university. But not all students are so fortunate; many of them fail in entrance or other examinations and delay their graduation several years. The reports of the Ministry of Education corroborate this statement in following words: "The students who cannot finish their education earlier than 28 or even later are quite numerous." Compared with the college men in America, Japanese students are delayed at least 3 years in getting into the world. Such a delay is almost unavoidable as long as Japanese students are compelled to spend so much energy in learning old Chinese characters in addition to one or two foreign languages which are totally unfamiliar to them.



Another cause for the prolongation of school life is the serious failure in educational facilities to meet the demand of the students. Every year schools are crowded and candidates surpass in number the available accommodations of schools which find no other way than to resort to a difficult selective examination. In middle schools only 65 per cent of total applicants are taken; in girl's normal schools only 30 per cent are allowed to enter.<sup>1</sup> This means that every year nearly one half of young students are disappointed while majority of them suffer nervous debility as the result of too violent study. The result of selective examination does not always mean a high standard of scholarship; the examination is made on a few subjects such as English and mathematics, which often excludes bright students and admits poor students who are good in only these few subjects. I know of <sup>a</sup> young man who has a remarkable intellectual power but who dislikes mathematics and languages, and who from this reason could not enter a high school and finally gave up entirely his ambition to get higher education. This is not the only example; such cases occur too often. Now the serious nature of a problem like this cannot be over-emphasized. Japan, in other words, is checking normal mental growth of her sons causing them to go astray or to break <sup>their</sup> health. Japan is a poor nation and cannot follow the example of the United States or some European countries but, is not Japan spending millions of dollars for military preparations? There are things which are entirely indispensable for the welfare of a nation, and others which are not. Military preparation was one of the former in the past. When Japan first

1 Japan Year Book for 1916, p. 259.





awoke from her long sleep, she found<sup>s</sup> terrible influence of aggressive European nations already extending to Asia; India had already succumbed and China was suffering from the mailed fists of England, Germany, and Russia. It was wise that Japan immediately perceived the necessity of preparedness and spent<sup>her</sup> utmost energy for it, for otherwise, who knows that Japan might not have been a Poland or an India? But because the army was the important factor which safeguarded Japan's existence in past it does not therefore follow that it will do so also in the future. The world is changing fast, human sentiment will not tolerate brutal war very long; already millions have voluntarily given up their lives to give an end to detestable war. What else than this can be a better proof that mankind is tired of war? If the world is thus changing, Japan must follow it or else she must go out of existence; adaptation to changing environment is the only safe means of guaranteeing national progress and welfare; no single nation can cope with the mighty tide of universal human sentiment. Military preparation is fast becoming a thing<sup>of</sup> secondary importance to Japan as it is to nearly all other nations and education now has become a thing of supreme importance---so important has it become that all other factors must be subordinated to the successful fulfillment of the program of national education. More schools, more teachers must be made a popular slogan of Japanese society.

The next serious difficulty is the government's unfriendly attitude toward private educational institutions. It has been the policy of the government to establish a unified system of education throughout the country under its direct control.



The private institutions, especially the universities, on the other hand, disliked this discriminatory policy of the government and cherished the idea of freedom and democracy in education. Such <sup>an</sup> attitude on the part of private institutions naturally provoked the feeling of the government and induced it to take somewhat hard measures against them. Though the rivalry between the public and private universities has been to a great extent allayed in recent years, it still is a powerful element in discouraging private enterprises for education. Special privileges conferred to the graduates of the Imperial Universities are the magnets which attract so many young men to these institutions, but as I stated before, only a small percentage of the applicants are admitted the others being disappointed. Such partiality must be removed if the serious failure of the government is to be met by the private educational enterprises.

The greatest evil of the Japanese education is the national unified system. In elementary and secondary schools <sup>the</sup> text books to be used, <sup>the</sup> subjects to be taught, <sup>the</sup> process of conducting classes are prescribed by the ministry of education regardless of local or provincial peculiarities in geographical conditions and in customs. This kind of system forbids local adaptation and checks natural growth of children's mental life. Nationalization of education is one of the most undemocratic attempts in the modern world. If, however, the government only subsidizes local educational boards with the purpose of encouraging education in the country as <sup>the</sup> Smith-Hughes Act recently adopted in the United States, and does not interfere with the local programs of education, it is the thing to be promoted.





So far I have discussed the general problems of the Japanese educational system; I shall now take up the problems of the girl's education in particular.

I am not sure as to the advantage or disadvantage of co-education. I believe that there ought to be differences of emphasis between girls' and boys' education. But the differences are slight compared with the vast space of ground in common. Men and women are both human beings and are the members of the same society with many of the same duties and same rights. There is a broad common ground between them in points of ideals, morality, intellect and sentiment. Liberal education which aims at uplifting of the social and personal ideals of young people can be well applied to men and women alike. If separate education is necessary for men and women, it is in the field of vocational training which equips them to follow different lines of work. Many industrial evils can be done away with if women are trained in the line of work to which they are best fitted and are given positions in it instead of being driven into masculine work in which their disadvantage is only too obvious. I repeat, then, that at least in liberal education which aims at nothing else than to make men and women good citizens, co-education is not only possible but desirable. It is possible because ~~because~~ men and women are not different in their ideals and sentiments; it is desirable because it will remove forever the obnoxious notion that women are inferior to men, and promote self-respect and intelligence of women. All this argument is trite in America but not so in Japan where the separate educationists always have the upper hand. These men maintain that women are inherently inferior to men in mental



capacity, and that therefore co-education tends to lower <sup>the</sup> general standard. This is to mistake the lack of training for inherent inability. As Thomas says, "Scientific pursuits and the allied intellectual occupations are a game which women have entered of late and their lack of practice is frequently mistaken for lack of natural ability." If women were inherently inferior, How about the American women? With the enjoyment of greater liberty, she has made an approach toward the standard of masculine scholarship and some individuals stand at the very top in their university studies and examinations. To deny the women the privilege for higher education and then to declare that they are inferior and therefore shall not be admitted to higher educational institutions is a clear case of fallacious argument.

Another objection advanced against co-education is the question of morality. Men fear that to bring young men and women together may tend to cause a serious moral degeneracy. This seems to me is a useless apprehension. It ignores the truth of human nature; it is separation rather than bringing them together that tends to disturb morality. Moreover, if higher education fails to safeguard morality, it is a sign of the failure of the education itself. As to free <sup>marriage</sup> between college men and women, it is exactly the thing to be promoted in society of Japan where abnormal conditions of marriage prevail and where men and women are very unequally mated in point of intelligence which is the cause of the lower status of women in homes. Co-education, moreover, makes up the deficiency of the lack of social institutions for free association of the young people. I am thoroughly convinced, therefore, that the best way of





improving the social, family, and intellectual status of women in Japan is to extend the privilege of higher education to women thus giving them opportunity to fully develop their natural capacity.

Another problem of girls' education is lack of socialization of schools. This is true to a certain extent of all schools in Japan but the tendency is more marked in girl's schools. Schools are not miniature society as an ideal school must be, but they are secluded, convent-like places where things are taught without proper regard to their bearing upon the affairs of society. Consequently training for thinking is neglected and that for routine and mechanical process of memorization is encouraged. The girls' schools still go on with the old principle of making the girls the good, obedient housewives rather than useful members of society with power and ability to think and act independently. As was seen in the curriculum of the girl's school, moral lessons are emphasized a great deal, but, what kind of morality? Instead of training women to be capable of sound moral judgement when they are confronted with <sup>the</sup> numerous problems of life, they are instructed to learn by heart a set of rules which may or may not apply to practical cases, and which make morality a thing of mechanical rules of life. I shall now take up the question of morality more fully.



## VI Problems of Morality.

Moral concepts of the Japanese are derived from the teachings of Buddhism, Shinto, Confucianism, and Bushido. The teachings of the Buddha include a profound philosophy of life and an elaborate code of morality. According to these teachings, the spiritual universe is composed of two egos; a cosmical ego and a personal ego. The personal ego is composed of physical and passional side of life which is the cause of evil and suffering. The cosmical ego is that state of eternal life in which bodily sensations are completely overcome and in which the spirit perceives the laws of the universe and harmonizes the life with them. This perfect state of life is called Nirvana and can be achieved after years of self-denial and suffering. Persons who reach the state of Nirvana enjoy eternal calm and resignation of soul and go to paradise; while others who indulge in base physical pleasure, and neglect the teachings of Buddha are sent to Hell where they are placed in eternal torture.

An important question which immediately arises in our mind is, How can we reach to the state of Nirvana? Buddha's answer is in negative terms. He laid down five "dents" (gokai) as the principal guide for reaching to the state of complete salvation. They are; (1) Do not take life (not only of man, but of all creatures), (2) Do not steal, (3) Do not commit adultery, (4) Do not tell lies, and (5) Do not drink intoxicating liquors. He further laid down additional six rules to be applied primarily for monks. They are; (1) Do not eat flesh, (2) Do not take part in dancing and music, (3) Do not adorn the body, (4) Do not sleep on any high or wide bed, (5) Do not possess either silver or gold, and (6) Never





minge with the opposite sex.<sup>1</sup> Thus while Buddha lays down negative rules, He does not give one single positive good to be encouraged or practiced. Its conception of the present world is that it is made up of material things and therefore bodily passion and appetite tend to cloud <sup>the</sup> moral purity of <sup>the</sup> soul, and that the best way to save one's soul is to shut himself up in a monastery (Tera) and come into contact with the practical world as little as possible. Women according to Buddhism are inherently sinful creatures<sup>2</sup> whose presence in this world degenerates <sup>the</sup> morality of men and makes the complete salvation of the world impossible. From this reason monks are forbidden to marry. Buddhism, in short, does not teach at all how to live wisely in the world; it teaches only how to get out of the world.

Such pessimistic and impractical religion does not meet the approval of active and vigorous people. Buddhism dominated the spiritual life of the Japanese during the middle ages in which the social life was made artificially static under the suicidal policy of the Tokugawas, but when the new era of Meiji set in guaranteeing free spiritual development of the people, Buddhism became no longer adequate to satisfy the social and spiritual requirement of the younger generations. In fact the intellectual class today scorn and ridicule the idea of earnestly believing in Buddhist teachings. But it is not quite so easy to eradicate the influence of the religion which has been woven closely into

1 For a complete discussion of the teachings of Buddha, see Hackmann, Buddhism as Religion, especially pp. 1-40.

2 See president Naruse's article on Fifty Years of New Japan, compiled by Count Okuma, Vol.ii p.196.



the social fabric and governed the customs, traditions, and conscience of the people for so many years. It is correct to say, therefore, that while Buddhism as a religion is rather declining, its teachings have become organic part of Japanese life and cannot easily be dropped from the life of the people.

Shinto is the surviving primitive religion of Nippon ; it is a cult of ancestor-worship developed out of ancient mythology. It teaches to adore and worship ancient national heroes who laid the foundation for the growth of the Yamato race. It enforces strict observance of the habits of purity and cleanliness. As I described in the section on history, the ancestors of the people were plain savages not at all different from other savages. This fact now has made the foundation of Shinto weak since it had stood on the mythological basis of the heavenly descent of the ancestors. In so far as its moral doctrine is concerned, however, its influence upon the people is by no means small especially in arousing the spirit of patriotism and filial piety and in enforcing loyalty to the nation and the Emperor. Its promotion of purity as virtue is especially effective in inducing the people to uphold moral and personal standards.

Confucianism is a minutely worked out moral code invented by the genius of ancient China. No religion, no cult has wrought such tremendous effects upon the moral and spiritual lives of the Japanese as the teachings of Confucianism. Ever since its introduction to Japan in the 7th century, its teachings practically moulded ways of thinking and living of the nation. The moral doctrine of Confucius is based upon filial piety. A family is the unit of society and is the foundation of the State. The State is





only a larger household having all its ethical principles founded on those of the primary unit---<sup>the</sup> family. <sup>The</sup> individual as <sup>an</sup> individual is quite imperfect; he is perfect only as a member of a family. Filial piety is at once the first and the last virtue of humanity and it may be transferred as loyalty to the ruler, or as personal virtue to the self. A superman (kunshi) is he who has thoroughly mastered the principles of filial piety and applies them to the conduct of daily life.

The principles of filial piety consist of (1) worshipping the ancestors, (2) respecting and obeying the parents and elder brothers, and (3) taking good care of <sup>the</sup> self which is a part of the family. Under these three headings Confucius developed most wonderful rules of moral conducts to be applied for practical life. These rules are to this day observed by the Chinese and Japanese and form the basic guidance of moral life. Gradually with the introduction of European civilization, especially of Christianity, the intellectual class of Japan came to realize serious defects in the Confucian system of ethics. One of the chief weak points of the code as it stands to day is its lack of adaptability. Because the code contains too much detail for daily conducts, some parts became inapplicable in modern society. And yet the system has received no revision. Indeed, two thousand years that have elapsed since the promulgation of the code have caused many marvelous changes in man's relation to environment, and in human ideals and knowledge, but Confucianism still remains just as it was twenty centuries ago. The difficulty is that the code stands in the way of social progress. It must be subjected to rational selection before long if the Japanese are to enjoy newer



ideals of social and personal morality.

There is another code of morality which recently became famous in the Occidental world chiefly through Dr. Nitobe's able elucidation.<sup>1</sup> "Bushido" says Dr. Nitobe, "is not a written code; at best it consists of a few maxims handed down from mouth to mouth or coming from the pen of some well known warrior or savant. More frequently it is a code unuttered and unwritten, possessing all the more the powerful sanction of veritable deed, and of law written on the fleshly tablets of the heart." It was the ways of knights during the feudal period of the middle ages which gradually developed to a system of moral code governing the conscience of the ruling class. Bushido embodied the best teachings of Buddhism, Shinto, Confucianism and adapted itself to the militaristic society of middle Japan. Unlike the other moral teachings, Bushido does not furnish a set of rigid rules to which human life must be conformed, but it gives principles of ethical conduct to be applied in moral judgements. Bushido, for this reason, seems to be the only ethical code in Japan which is capable of evolving in accordance with the progress of national life. As Dr. Nitobe states, "It may vanish as an independent code of ethics, but its power will not perish from the earth." The only weakness of Bushido is its lack of religious sanction back of it. If Christianity and Bushido may be combined by the native genius in such a way as to deteriorate neither, it will undoubtedly result in a system which includes the best of both Oriental and Occidental ideals.

Japanese morality which is an organic growth of Buddhism, Shinto, Confucianism, and Bushido has the elements of each of them in it. Buddha's negative teachings with its emphasis on withdrawal





from the actual world, and on a second world to come still prevails <sup>the</sup> in moral concepts of the nation. It is much better to avoid evils ---do not talk evil, do not see evil, do not hear evil---than to risk one's self in doing some good, is the characteristic form of Japanese morality. Such a passive conception of morality tends rather to weaken the power of resistance against evil and make the creation of strong power improbable.

The morality of the Japanese is at present in a chaotic state. Ethical code being the most conservative institution of society, have refused to progress in accordance with national development. General progress of the material and spiritual lives of the people, has been brought about as the consequence of a closer contact with the rest of the world, now necessitates a complete readjustment of the existing moral codes. Japanese society is undergoing now a moral transition. What will come out of their confusion, it is most interesting to observe and speculate. It is most earnestly hoped that the importance of individual freedom to develop the conditions of life in harmony with the welfare of society may come to receive a greater attention of the nation. The people lived too long without realizing the value and significance of individual life; they have too long lived their lives as the rulers wanted them to live. It is high time for them to be widely awake. At the same time, it is to be hoped that society, the aggregate of all individuals, will receive fuller recognition and care with a view to harmoniously adjusting the happiness of the individual with the welfare and progress of the whole.



## VII Summary and Conclusion

So far I have discussed various outstanding problems of the Japanese women criticizing present institutions of Japanese society in so far as they are concerned with the status of women, and presenting some suggestions for the solution of the difficulties and for improvement of the institutions. Now I shall summarize the main line of my argument. Historical study of the status of the Japanese women revealed the fact that their weak physique as well as their intellectual inferiority are not due, as the people are apt to believe, to the inherent inferiority of the women, but to the influence of religious and social conditions which deprived the women of their social freedom and access to intellectual pursuits so that they became totally unfit to start an independent career and to take part in the affairs of society and of the State. Therefore when general awakening of the women came as the result of Occidental influence, they found themselves in pitiable conditions of complete subjugation to men. The backwardness of women's status appeared all the more vivid from the sharp contrast with <sup>the</sup> general social progress of modern Japan. The women then fully realized the importance of completely freeing themselves from the bondage of the ages, and some radical women even went so far as to resort, as a means to this end, to some extreme policy of Occidental feminism while fortunately the majority of them selected the wise course of gradual adjustment. Their efforts have been directed toward the improvement of their position in the vital fields of material subsistence, marriage, education, and moral concepts.





In the economic field the most urgent need is the improvement of wages and other general working conditions, which from the wrong policy of the government, still largely remain neglected. The next important problem is the opening of the greater field of employment for women. Due perhaps to the poor vocational training and to the greed of the capitalist, women never get fair wages or positions decent enough to guarantee their independence. The establishment of the opportunities for independent careers is necessary not so much to keep women away from household drudgery as to enable them to marry men with equal rights and demands. As to the financial arrangement between wife and husband in the Japanese household, it seems to be far more in ideal condition than in America.

In question of marriage the serious difficulty is <sup>the</sup> little freedom given to the young people in deciding who shall be their mates. This is due partly to the Confucian conception of the absolute power of the parents over their children and to the lack of opportunity for social intercourse of the young people, which makes them unfit to make independent selection of their life partners. While the strict supervision of the parents is not a thing to be despised, it is beyond argument that the parties who marry must have the great <sup>the</sup> voice in decision. This can be made possible only when social provisions for the respectable association of the young people are created. It is with great pleasure that I observe a growing sentiment among the natives for giving a more liberal opportunity for the young people to mingle with each other. An even more serious problem is <sup>the</sup> unfair treatment of the wife by the members of her husband's family especially by his parents.



Most domestic tragedies in Japan have their cause in the notorious relationship between parent-in-law and the bride. This difficulty may be partially avoided by the abolition of retiring (inkio) of old people to depend on their eldest son, <sup>may be</sup> and wholly done away with by the starting of a new household for the young couple. Finally the method of <sup>the</sup> Japanese household is quite unscientific and consume unnecessarily a great deal of the housewife's time which deprives her of leisure hours. Upon <sup>the</sup> application of domestic science together with rational selection among the many formal ceremonies, the drudgery of the household will undoubtedly be lightened.

The most far reaching condition of progress for women of Japan is to be found in the reform of education. At present Japanese women are not given equal educational opportunity with men either in liberal or in vocational training. It is wrong to deny higher education for women because they are backward; their backwardness is the outcome of the past social conditions, and it is the very reason that female education must be encouraged. I do not see any better solution of the problem than to adopt the system of co-education which has already been proved a success by more than a few civilized nations. If co-education in Japan would for a time hold down, as many Japanese educators of old school apprehend, the scholarship of men, that sacrifice would be rewarded amply by the advanced intelligence of women on whose education depends the euthenic and eugenic progress of the people. Democratization of education is another task of Japan. To check normal development of children by attempting to mould them to a certain national ideal is an exact imitation of Prussianism which





is now meeting a death blow.

In the field of morality a radical reform is unavoidable. Old, rigid doctrines unable to meet the needs of complex social life of today still cling to the conscience of the people forcing them automatically and blindly to obey. These time-worn concepts must be boldly thrown aside and newer ideals of life and morality must be substituted. Greater opportunity for higher education, exchange of useful ideas with foreign nations, and assimilation of the Christian teachings will undoubtedly help the people to establish moral freedom. Freedom from <sup>the</sup> old morality is fundamental <sup>the</sup> for improvement of the status of women because it is the old ethical code that has subjugated women in the past, and still holds a tight grip upon them at present.

In conclusion it must be stated that, of late, women of Europe and America have come to realize their message and responsibilities as the members of society and of humanity. In social reformaton, through their successful fighting against all kinds of evil, women have achieved remarkable results. Their efforts are now being gradually directed to the radical improvement of the system of international relationship in such a way that a few men shall never have the power to misguide the mass, that the right of weaker and smaller nations shall be respected, that reason and justice shall prevail over might, and that bloodshed shall never take place forever. Woman, in short, is the tremendous democratizing power of the world, and the Kingdom of God will not come to earth until her messages are fully delivered to humanity.



Why should Hippon alone be slow to recognize the value of the woman's share on the national life. Japan's society is full of evils, sins, and crimes which the nation cannot successfully combat untill woman is given opportunity to share in the conflict. Japan, moreover, is now facing one of the gravest crises in her history. She is now obliged to choose one way or the other between democracy and autocracy. Should the nation choose the wrong course she cannot escape the condemnation and enmity of the world. Never before has Japan met a situation in which a greater freedom for women would be so powerful a factor in assuring national safety and progress as it would be in this critical moment of unprecedented turmoil. It is my sincere hope that Japanese people as a whole may see the significance of woman's movement and cooperate with enlightened female leaders and improve the status of women, and that the women may realize the tremendous nature of the problems and sincerely toil for their satisfactory solution.





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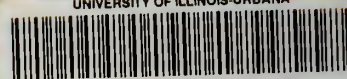
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